

A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW
THE FIRM FOUNDATION FOR SPIRITUAL FORMATION

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ABBREVIATIONS

ATR: African Traditional Religion

AWV: African Worldview

BWV: Biblical Worldview

HTC: Harare Theological College

WWV: Western Worldview

ABSTRACT

Spiritual maturity is vital if the Church is going to fulfill the Great Commission, producing disciples who obey Christ's commands. Research reveals tremendous growth in the number of Christians in sub-Saharan Africa, yet the corruption, violence, and AIDS pandemic paint a different picture. Even though new Bible colleges continue to be formed to train pastors and teachers, the African church remains spiritually immature and syncretistic. Through quantitative and qualitative research, this thesis-project focused on the influence of the African worldview on Christian spirituality in the lives of the students at the Harare Theological College. The results indicate that the firm foundation that Christ states is needed to survive the storms of life is a Biblical worldview (Luke 6:46-49).

CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

Introduction

As ambassadors for Christ who have been given the ministry of reconciliation, believers have a duty to go into the world with the message of hope and reconciliation with God (2 Cor 5:18-21). Jesus himself commissioned his followers to go and make disciples of all nations by teaching them to obey all that he commanded (Matt 28:18-20). Christ's focus was on his followers becoming doers of the Word of God and not just hearers only (Jas 1:22-25). However, doing the Word of God does not mean a works-based righteousness or an outward obedience. Christ condemned those who were prophesying, casting out demons and doing great works in his name because their hearts were evil (Matt 7:21-23). The obedience to God's Word that pleases the Lord comes from faith and a life transformation that involves a person's worldview (2 Cor 5:17).

Worldview as the Foundation

Jesus' parable of the wise and foolish man in Luke 6:46-49 and Matthew 7:24-27 indicates that listening to his words is not enough to save mankind from the perils of this life. The wise man listened and then dug deep and applied Christ's words to his life so that he could withstand all the forces that had destructive potential. John 10:10b indicates that Satan and his ungodly world systems of thought and belief that are opposed to God can destroy those who do not have a firm foundation and faith in Jesus.

Jesus desires for all his followers to mature and grow in their faith (1 Cor 14:20; Eph 4:13-15; Col 1:28; Col 4:12; Heb 5:14; Jas 1:4). Therefore, the Church has developed discipleship programs to assist in this process. Spiritual formation is a vital

aspect of this growth process. However, very few programs mention the necessity of worldview transformation. Worldview is not a term found in the Bible, but the importance of evaluating and renovating one's worldview is found throughout. The wise man had a firm foundation, and his house withstood the onslaught of the winds, rain, and flood. Likewise, today, believers must ensure that their foundations are secure if they are to survive.¹

Worldview as Part of Culture

A basic understanding of culture and worldview are vital for effective communication of the Gospel to people, especially if they belong to a different people group. However, the first step is to comprehend one's own culture and worldview fully.

Christian missiologists identify three responses to sin in human cultures: guilt, shame, and fear. These three moral emotions have become the foundation for three types of culture: (1) *guilt-innocence cultures* are individualistic societies (mostly Western), where people who break the laws are guilty and seek justice or forgiveness to rectify a wrong, (2) *shame-honor cultures* describes collectivistic cultures (common in the East), where people shamed for not fulfilling group expectations seek to restore their honor before the community, and (3) *fear-power cultures* refers to animistic contexts (typically tribal or African), where people afraid of evil and harm pursue power over the spirit world through magical rituals. These three types of culture are like group personalities defining how people view the world.²

The study of culture can be quite involved and complex, but one can begin to understand it by visualizing "layers or levels of understanding."³ The outer layer is that of

¹ Hans Weerstra, "Christian Worldview Development," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 14, no. 1 (January-March 1997): 3-4.

² Jayson Georges, *The 3D Gospel Ministry in Guilt, Shame, and Fear Cultures* (US: Tim & 275, 2014), 10-11.

³ Lloyd E. Kwast, "Understanding Culture," in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement a Reader*, ed. by Ralph Winter and Steven Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1981), 361.

the people's behavior and gives the group their identity through a specific way of doing things. These behaviors were chosen due to the cultural values in the inner level, and these values indicate that which is good, beneficial or best. This layer allows those in each culture to know what should be done in specific situations to fit into their pattern of life. These values were formed from a deeper level or the cultural beliefs that provide the people with the ability to know how to perceive that which is true. Worldview is next, and it is at the heart of every culture. It answers the question, "What is real?" Here is where the ultimate questions of life are asked.⁴ Kwast found using a diagram to be helpful when explaining culture (Figure 1).⁵



Figure 1: Diagram of Kwast's Explanation of Culture

Chalk believes that there are three main topics that are dealt with in this inner circle or worldview and the answers will control all components of the culture.

There are three basic areas of human inquiry: metaphysics or what really exists; morals or how to know right and wrong; and epistemology, or what can we know and how can we know it for sure... Worldview is important for a number of reasons: it determines the prosperity and development of peoples and nations; it

⁴ Kwast, "Understanding Culture," 362.

⁵ "The Domain for Truth," accessed November 30, 2017, <https://veritasdomain.wordpress.com/category/people/lloyd-kwast/>.

determines the contentment and level of satisfaction of individuals; it shapes politics of nations; it determines the space-time future of individuals and nations; and it determines an individual's eternity.⁶

A worldview defines how one sees life and the world at large; it shapes and informs one's experiences. Many people compare a worldview with a pair of colored glasses that affect and color everything that is seen and then provides one's fundamental beliefs about the universe, God, life and death and the purpose of it all. Here is the foundation of each man's life that must be firm and secure to withstand the storms of life.

Biblical Worldview

There is a consensus that believers need to live by a Biblical worldview; however, there is not always an agreement as to what that entails. A Biblical worldview is a perspective on life that allows individuals to comprehend their experiences and live them out according to what the Bible teaches. When conducting one of their numerous surveys on the church in the United States, the Barna Research Team used the following definition. A Biblical worldview means a person is,

to believe that unchanging moral truth exists; that the source of moral truth is the Bible; that the Bible is accurate in all of the principles it teaches; that eternal spiritual salvation cannot be earned; that Jesus lived a sinless life on earth; that every person has a responsibility to share their religious beliefs with others; that Satan is a living force, not just a symbol of evil; and that God is the all-knowing, all-present, all-powerful maker of the universe who still rules that creation today.⁷

The author would also add to that definition that Jesus, who is God incarnate, not only lived a sinless life but died and rose again to redeem creation and reconcile mankind to

⁶ Jack Chalk, *Making Disciples in Africa* (Cumbria, UK: Langham, 2013), 7.

⁷ David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks About Christianity and Why It Matters* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 250.

himself so that an intimate relationship could be restored. Moreover, Satan, along with his evil spirits, seek to defeat God's plan for mankind.

Research Problem

Lack of Spiritual Transformation

For over ten years the author taught Spiritual Formation, Hermeneutics, Systematic Theology, Christian Education and Missions at the Harare Theological College (HTC) in Zimbabwe. Teaching Biblical truths was an essential part of the job; however, the lecturer's primary focus remained the spiritual development of the students. Most of the students came from the Shona tribe, a group of culturally similar Bantu-speaking peoples who live in Zimbabwe. Concern arose when the teacher noted that even though the pupils were receiving sound Biblical teaching, change was not always seen in their thoughts, attitudes, and behavior. They may have been knowledgeable of the truths of Scripture, but they were not living them out. The lack of spiritual growth resulted in the author pondering what was needed to bring about life transformation in the students at HTC. That led to researching spiritual formation and the influence that the African worldview, the African culture, and the African Traditional Religion had upon Christian spirituality.

The author began to realize that all passionate, reflective practitioners who desire to assist believers with spiritual formation must first deal with their worldviews. The ability to understand and obey God's Word can only happen once a person's worldview is evangelized and transformed. The problem is that there are many worldviews, all of which oppose God's in different aspects. The ability to disciple others first requires the evaluation of one's own worldview. Whether ministering in a church in the United States

or as a missionary in Africa, it is essential that the practitioner is capable of working with various cultures and worldviews. A Biblical worldview is the firm foundation that is required to make believers complete, mature and equipped for every good work (2 Tim 3:17).

Spiritual Formation and Spirituality

“Christian spirituality is the domain of lived Christian experience. It is about living all of life...before God, through Christ, in the transforming and empowering presence of the Holy Spirit.”⁸ Its focus is on being attentive to the Holy Spirit’s voice so that one is open to his transforming power at all times. The effects of this encounter with the Holy Spirit include being changed into the likeness of Christ and joining God in his work on earth which can be equated to spiritual formation. Spirituality can be difficult to comprehend since believers are used to thinking of evangelical Christianity as mainly holding onto specific doctrines and beliefs and not necessarily living a changed life that reflects Christ.⁹ Scorgie believes that spirituality is a “Spirit-enabled relationship with the triune God that results in openness to others, healing progress toward Christ-likeness, and willing participation in God’s purposes in the world.”¹⁰ One’s worldview has a great impact on the way Scripture is read, interpreted and applied and it can prevent the development of sound doctrinal foundations and mature spirituality. Although myriads of

⁸ Glen Scorgie, “Overview of Christian Spirituality,” in *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*, ed. Glen Scorgie, Simon Chan, Gordon Smith, and James Smith III (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 27.

⁹ Scorgie, “Overview of Christian Spirituality,” 28.

¹⁰ Scorgie, “Overview of Christian Spirituality,” 30.

Africans have “prayed the prayer” and believe that Jesus died for their sins, they are not living lives that are Christ-like.

Willard considers spiritual formation to be the process where one’s spirit grows and becomes more Christ-like which requires the entire human nature to be totally renovated. He states that “the spiritual renovation and the ‘spirituality’ that comes from Jesus is nothing less than an invasion of natural human reality by a supernatural life ‘from above.’”¹¹ Moreover, this spiritual renovation must include one’s worldview.

Despite all the Bible verses that indicate what a spiritual life entails and what God expects in the lives of believers, research done on the church in the United States by the Barna Research Group in 2007 revealed that claiming to be a Christian did not ensure that one was becoming more Christ-like.

In virtually every study we conduct, representing thousands of interviews every year, born-again Christians fail to display much attitudinal or behavioral evidence of transformed lives. For instance...we found that most of the lifestyle activities of born-again Christians were statistically equivalent to those of non-born-again. When asked to identify their activities over the last thirty days, born-again believers were just as likely to bet or gamble, to visit a pornographic website, to take something that did not belong to them, to consult a medium or psychic, to physically fight or abuse someone, to have consumed enough alcohol to be considered legally drunk, to have used an illegal, nonprescription drug, to have said something to someone that was not true, to have gotten back at someone for something he or she did, and to have said mean things behind another person’s back. No difference.¹²

It appears that most Christians believe that “getting saved” means praying a prayer so that one’s sins are forgiven, and that alone will allow them into heaven. There seems to be

¹¹ Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting On the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002), 19.

¹² Kinnaman and Lyons, *UnChristian*, 47.

little concept of living a holy life (1 Pet 1:15) and being transformed into the image of Christ (Rom 8:29).

Spiritual Formation and Biblical Worldview

Spiritual formation or this life transformation into the image of Christ is a process. It is part of sanctification and an essential focus of discipleship. For a Christian to mature in their faith as God desires, there must be an imparting of Biblical theology that will provide the proper structure on which this Christ-like life will develop. A believer must be taught Biblical doctrine which will be the foundation for the worldview that influences their values and behavior.¹³ Teaching sound Biblical theology has been the focus at the Harare Theological College. However, knowing about God is not enough to transform a life. There must be an intimate acquaintance with the Lord Jesus Christ and a commitment to obediently follow him while carrying one's cross (Matt 16:24). Prayer and Bible Study are essential parts of this relationship between God and man which brings such radical transformation to an individual. Without a Biblical worldview to ensure the proper use of spiritual disciplines, spiritual growth will be stunted.

The African church is filled with Christian nominalism and religious syncretism due to the preaching of the Word without contextualization and an understanding of the difference in the African worldview and a Biblical worldview.¹⁴ At the heart of any culture is its worldview which answers the question: "What is real?" The culture's worldview provides a system of beliefs which will be reflected in the choices and

¹³ David Hesselgrave, "Worldview, Scripture and Missionary Communication," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 14, no. 2 (April-June 1997): 80.

¹⁴ Ronaldo Lidorio, "Biblical Theology of Contextualization," accessed September 26, 2015, http://ronaldo.lidorio.com.br/eng/index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=41.

behaviors of the people. Kwast believes that worldview is the core element of any, and all cultures. He insists that no significant change can take place in the lives and hearts of people until their worldview has been deeply impacted.¹⁵ Eckman states, “Christianity is not only a personal relationship with the living God through faith in Jesus Christ; it is a worldview. It is an entire way of thinking, covering not only theology but how to think about ethics, history, science, literature – about everything.”¹⁶

By the work of the Holy Spirit, people can be converted as they hear the Gospel in their own languages and cultural context. However, for spiritual growth and maturity to take place, their worldview must be transformed. The Gospel requires a total transformation of all worldviews so that the Church understands, teaches and preserves the truth of God throughout the centuries.¹⁷

Much of the instruction on prayer and Bible Study was often misunderstood and misapplied by the students who had been predominately raised in the traditional religion/culture of the Shona people and continued to live with an African worldview. They may have been “born again” believers, but their lives did not reflect the life they were meant to be living. Africans are religious people, and they will dutifully practice the spiritual disciplines, but unless their understanding of God, spiritual beings, humanity, sin, salvation, spirituality and the destiny of everything is brought into agreement with

¹⁵ Kwast, “Understanding Culture,” 363-364.

¹⁶ James P. Eckman, *The Truth About Worldviews* (Wheaton, IL: Evangelical Training Association, 2006), 113.

¹⁷ Paul G. Hiebert, “Conversion and Worldview Transformation,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 14, no. 2 (April-June 1997): 84.

the Bible, their efforts will be in vain. That is why it is often said that African Christianity is “a mile wide and an inch deep.”

African Worldview and African Traditional Religion

“Christianity is spreading faster than at any time or place in the last 200 years, with an estimated 1,200 new churches being started every month across Africa.”¹⁸ By 2010, sixty-five percent of sub-Saharan Africans claimed to be Christian.¹⁹ If this is true, then sub-Saharan Africa should have a Christian culture which influences the rest of society. However, Africa is a continent that is being decimated by corruption, tribal warfare, and AIDS. One has to wonder if the discrepancy in the lives of those who claim to be followers of Jesus and Christ’s life and teachings is due to their worldview. Without a worldview transformation, these Christians will continue to live from their African worldview.

Even though Africa is an immense continent with diverse people groups, languages, and cultures, there are fundamental beliefs that can be found throughout. Mbiti describes this core as “belief in God, existence of spirits, continuation of human life after death, magic and witchcraft.”²⁰ This core also includes belief in the importance of community. Despite the differences found in various traditions, there is enough of a commonality that African Traditional Religion (ATR) is discussed in the singular.

ATR is the indigenous religion of the African continent that has been practiced by the people for centuries. It is “traditional” because it has been transmitted orally through

¹⁸ Chalk, *Making Disciples in Africa*, 10-11.

¹⁹ Chalk, *Making Disciples in Africa*, 16.

²⁰ John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Garden City, NJ: Anchor Books, 1969), 103.

stories, myths, and proverbs. The beliefs and practices have been passed on from generation to generation through songs, dances, and festivals.²¹ It has never been recorded in written form. For most Americans, religion is just a set of beliefs and attending church. For Africans, religion is an integral part of their lives in which “church” happens whenever daily events call for it. Every life experience has some religious ritual to ensure success and deal with failure, and most Africans are raised participating in these activities with family and community. According to Mbiti,

Traditional religions are not primarily for the individual, but for his community of which he is a part. Chapters of African religion are written everywhere in the life of the community, and in traditional society there are no irreligious people. To be human is to belong to the whole community, and to do so involves participating in the beliefs, ceremonies, rituals and festivities of that community. A person cannot detach himself from the religion of his group, for to do so is to be severed from his roots, his foundation, his context of security, his kinships, and the entire group for those who make him aware of his own existence. To be without one of these corporate elements of life, is to be out of the whole picture. Therefore, to be without religion amounts to a self-excommunication from the entire life of society, and African peoples do not know how to exist without religion.²²

For an African to accept Christianity to the point that his worldview changes, can be a frightening ordeal for as Mbiti implies in the above quote, the convert is no longer viewed as an African. Therefore, what happens in most African churches is that a syncretic form of Christianity, in which the old worldview is kept, is presented. Christian practices may be followed until a crisis presents itself and then most revert to their traditional beliefs and rituals, resulting in a form of Christianity that is not Biblical. It is vital for all those who minister in Africa to understand ATR and the African worldview

²¹ Chris Ampadu, “Correlation Between ATR and the Problems of African Societies Today,” accessed March 25, 2016, http://www.wciu.edu/docs/general/ampadu_article.pdf.

²² Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 3.

in order to help Africans grow in their faith and develop a Biblical worldview. The African worldview is the basis for the religion and culture, and it will not spontaneously change when one becomes a Christian. “The ancestor cult is the central feature of African religion,” and the role of the ancestors impacts most all the beliefs and practices.²³ Most Africans have relied upon the ancestral spirits before coming to Christ and will continue to do so unless they learn how to trust Christ and the Word of God to deal with life’s issues.²⁴

Hierarchy of Power

There is a hierarchical system found not only in the African culture but also in the spirit world as well. In the tribe, the chief has the highest authority followed by the elders, parents, and children. In the spirit world, God is the highest, followed by ancestral spirits, spirits, and humans. As long as the hierarchy of power remains intact, the universe will maintain its correct character. However, any imbalance of power can create chaos and havoc due to the lack of protective power or the introduction of malevolent power. ATR provides a way of dealing with these spiritual forces that impact the daily lives of Africans and is the reason why they continue to hold onto their traditional beliefs.²⁵

²³ Elizabeth Ezenweke, “The Cult of the Ancestors: A Focal Point for Prayers in African Traditional Communities,” accessed March 25, 2016, <http://www.ajol.info/index.php/jrhr/article/view/87321>.

²⁴ Karl Grebe and Wilfred Fon, *African Traditional Religion and Christian Counseling* (Wheaton, IL: Oasis Int Ltd, 2006), 9.

²⁵ Vernon Light, *Transforming the Church in Africa* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2012), 83.

God

In all traditional societies, there is a belief in God who is a spirit. He may be called by various names, but he is known as the creator who is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. According to the Shona belief, God is referred to by many names such as *Mwari* (“The Great One” or “He who is”), *Musikavanhu* (“the One who created people”), or *Nyadenga* (“the Great Spirit that lives above in heaven”).²⁶ God made everything in the world, the good and the bad, the physical and the spiritual beings and powers. Although God cares for his creation, he is far removed from it, and there is no concept of man having a personal relationship with God.²⁷ Silence is the proper attitude towards God, and he should not be approached directly in prayer and worship. Just as a son would never consult his father on a significant issue, so the Shona would never ask help from *Mwari*.²⁸ The African culture dictates that one must utilize intermediaries to communicate with anyone who is elevated in the hierarchy of power whether human or spirit. Therefore, the ancestral spirits are the recipients of prayer and sacrifice. As representatives of God, the people appease the spirits through sacrifice and rituals to manipulate them, so they will protect, provide and go to God to present their petitions and needs.²⁹

²⁶ Manie Bosman, “Shona Traditional Religion,” accessed March 25, 2016, http://www.philadelphia project.co.za/downloads/religions/africa_trad_shona.pdf

²⁷ Bosman, “Shona Traditional Religion.”

²⁸ Michael Gelfand, “The Shona Religion,” accessed March 25, 2016 <http://pdfproc.lib.msu.edu/?file=/DMC/African%20Journals/pdfs/Journal%20of%20the%20University%20of%20Zimbabwe/vol1n1/juz001001005.pdf>, 42.

²⁹ Laurenti Magesa, “African Christian Spirituality,” in *African Theology on the Way. Current Conversations*, ed. Diane Stinton (Great Britain: SPCK International Study Guide 46, 2010), 69-71.

There is little knowledge of God's holiness and goodness. God may be at the top of the hierarchy of the spirit world; however, it is difficult to trust a God who created both good and evil spirits. The spirits seem to be in control of the world, and one wonders if God is truly sovereign over all.³⁰ It is believed that God only works through the ancestors to whom he has delegated authority to govern the earth. God provided all things needed to sustain creation, but since he is transcendent, he is perceived not to have a direct role in daily life.³¹ Because God is so far removed, "the words of the village elders and the will of the tribal ancestors seem to be much more important for daily living than the knowledge of God."³²

Man

Africans believe that God created man's body and then gave him life by breathing into him. Man is both a physical and spiritual being, and at the point of death, the disembodied spirit continues to exist for as long as the family remembers him personally. Man's goal is to become an ancestral spirit at death so the family will call upon him for generations. After that point, he will "join the world of nameless spirits."³³

Man is viewed as being morally neutral, not sinful. It is believed that God is far removed because man offended him at some point in time in the past and man is capable of sinning, but he is not viewed as being sinful by nature.³⁴ Since God is transcendent,

³⁰ Grebe and Fon, *African Traditional Religion and Christian Counseling*, 36-42.

³¹ Light, *Transforming the Church in Africa*, 84-85.

³² Wilbur O'Donovan, *Biblical Christianity in African Perspective* (Lexington, KY: Oasis International Ltd., 1997), 99.

³³ Chalk, *Making Disciples in Africa*, 123.

³⁴ Chalk, *Making Disciples in Africa*, 123.

sinful behavior is determined by the community, not God. “Sin is not a direct offence against God, or a transgression of some moral law or virtue, but a breakdown of the complex structure of human relationships within the community including ancestors.”³⁵ There is no belief in heaven or hell or of a judgment that brings about eternal consequences. Punishment for wrongdoing occurs in this life, and specific payment for any iniquity that offends the community (living or dead) must be made to maintain the unity and harmony of the village.³⁶

Spirit Beings

The ancestral cult is the major aspect of ATR. The ancestors, or the living-dead, are believed to be disembodied spirits of people who lived upright lives here on earth, had children, died a natural death at an old age, and received the required funeral rites and rituals. Without the proper funeral rites, the dead person may become a wandering ghost and a danger to all who remain alive.³⁷ What is important to Africans is not life in heaven, but that the dead continue to be involved in this life among the living. Hell, is considered being in the afterlife with no children to remember one’s life.³⁸

It is believed that those who have died can continue to live in their community in a spiritual state of existence. These ancestral spirits receive power and authority and are capable of protecting and providing for their family as well as communicating with God. Africans live in continual fear of evil spirits, but they believe that the ancestral spirits

³⁵ Klaus Nurnberger, *The Living Dead and the Living God: Christ and the Ancestors in a Changing Africa* (Pietermaritzburg, South Africa: Cluster Publications, 2007), 27.

³⁶ Michael Gelfand, *African Crucible* (Cape Town, South Africa: Juta, 1968), 4.

³⁷ Ezenweke, “The Cult of the Ancestors.”

³⁸ Light, *Transforming the Church in Africa*, 88.

have the power to protect them from danger. However, these living dead expect to be cared for and venerated by the family in exchange for provision. If the family does not fulfill their obligations, the ancestors will bring disaster.³⁹ It is the role of the ancestral spirits to punish those who commit any trespasses that may be unknown to the rest of the family. Rituals and prayers are made to the ancestors, not God, for man is unable to speak to *Mwari* and he must depend upon the ancestors to act as his mediators. That is why it is vital to keep from offending them.⁴⁰

There are two different groups of ancestral spirits. The first group is the *mhondoro* who are the spirits of the chiefs or founders of a tribe; they are concerned with the good of the people as a whole. They are responsible for rain, good crops, and protecting the chief. Then there are the *vadzimu* who are the spirits of the elders of individual families. They are concerned with protecting and providing for their families.⁴¹

There are also malevolent types of spirits (*ngozi*, *shavi*, *majukwa*) that are part of the living dead community and they can bring serious disaster, sickness, and death to a family. When attacks occur, the offending spirit must be appeased by first discovering the cause of its wrath and then making restitution through offerings and sacrifices. To gain this information, one must go to a *n'anga* or witch doctor who can determine how to placate the enraged spirit through prayer and sacrifice. The Shona do not believe in the existence of Satan, but they do believe in *varoyi* or witches who command ghosts (*zvidhoma*) to do their evil work.⁴² ATR focuses on ways of preventing misfortune and

³⁹ Ezenweke, "The Cult of the Ancestors."

⁴⁰ Gelfand, *African Crucible*, 4.

⁴¹ Gelfand, "The Shona Religion," 37-38.

⁴² Bosman, "Shona Traditional Religion

calamity brought about by spiritual powers that permeate all of life. Africans live in continual fear of the spirits around them, and they seek ways to appease and manipulate them through rituals and sacrifices.⁴³

Spirit Mediums

Africa, being an animistic and tribal society, is mainly a fear-power based culture. The people live in continual fear of evil and harm that can be brought upon them and they seek power over the spirit world through magical rituals. They believe there are certain secret techniques (amulets, fetishes, rituals, incantations, magic) that can manipulate the spirit world to bring about blessing instead of curses. Rituals are a big part of the Shona culture and religion, and there are rituals to be followed for everything and every occasion in life. The ceremonies are carried out as required, not to commune with God or worship him, but to ensure that the spirits are not offended. Everything is done out of fear of the spirit world.⁴⁴

“One of the fundamental tenets of Shona religion is the belief in real communication with the world of spirits through the medium or host of the particular spirit whose help is sought.”⁴⁵ Each individual spirit must find a person that is willing to become its host so that it can reveal its wants or advice to the rest of the community. The chosen host becomes the servant of its spirit ready to obey its desires at any time. The Shona term for a spirit medium is *svikiro*. The people consider any revelation given by

⁴³ Grebe and Fon, *African Traditional Religion and Christian Counseling*, 10, 27.

⁴⁴ Gelfand, *African Crucible*, 9.

⁴⁵ Gelfand, “The Shona Religion,” 37-38.

the host as truth and believe that being able to hear the voice of the spirit talking to them through a medium is proof of the spirit world.⁴⁶

An important aspect of the Shona religion is the ability of man to unite with the spiritual world through the *svikiro* once they are possessed by the spirit. Prayers and sacrifices are offered to honor the spirit and to seek their advice. If the spirit has been offended, the people make an intense effort to obtain forgiveness through any means. However, since this spirit is often a family member, they are comforted and assured that reconciliation and peace will come soon.⁴⁷

Africans view all events holistically so that when there is a problem they look not only for the physical cause, but also the spiritual cause. They believe that the world would run smoothly if there were no evil forces, but since evil agents exist they must be able to diagnose the cause.⁴⁸ *Svikiro* or diviners are often consulted when the community has been attacked and unity has been disrupted so that harmony will be restored. *N'angas* (herbalists or doctors) are sought to heal sickness or disease that is thought to be caused by witchcraft. These specialists possess a healing gift and seem to have power over spirits and can control or manipulate them at will. Witches (*varoyi*) cause disruption to society and are uncontrollably evil. They are feared by all Africans and witchcraft is suspected in many cases of disaster or trouble. Remedies for witchcraft are often revealed to the *svikiros* or *n'angas* by the ancestors and include rituals, amulets, sacrifices and other rites.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Gelfand, "The Shona Religion," 37-38.

⁴⁷ Gelfand, "The Shona Religion," 44.

⁴⁸ Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 215.

⁴⁹ Light, *Transforming the Church in Africa*, 94-96.

Community

Community is significant in ATR, and the strong sense of corporate identity and the deep relationships between individuals may be due to the belief that God is so far removed from them. Life as a human is only experienced in relationship to the group, and dependency characterizes a communal culture. This community encompasses not only the living but also the living dead and the soon to be living. Being in right relationship is vitally important, and anything that disrupts the unity is viewed as evil which must be eliminated.⁵⁰

Protestant missionaries started to bring the Gospel to the Shona people around 1800. However, they presented it with the wrappings of a Western worldview which comes from a guilt-innocence based culture. This created an African church that bears no resemblance to its people and their culture. Instead of religion being part of everyday life, it was relegated to church on Sunday. Instead of elated dancing to drums in worship, in many churches, the people stand quietly singing hymns and reciting liturgy. The preaching is patterned after well-known TV preachers and evangelists from the States using the typical “Christianeze” heard in evangelical churches. Now, the Shona view their pastor as the new *n’anga*, prophet, or man of God. Just as they went to the *n’anga* to have spiritual truths revealed and to be prayed for and cured through rituals, they now go to the pastor for prayer and instruction. There is little understanding that each person is responsible for maturing in their faith and learning how to pray and read God’s Word, that is for the spiritual specialist.

⁵⁰ Light, *Transforming the Church in Africa*, 97-99.

When a Shona individual decides to follow Christ, it can create chaos for the extended family or community. There is considerable fear that the ancestors will punish everyone if the traditional rituals are not carried out by all members. In fact, the family may ask the *vadzimu* to bring disaster upon the convert so that they will return to their proper place in the community. African Christians struggle to discontinue their traditional practices, and they live in fear, for when problems arise, they will assume that it is caused by offending some spirit.⁵¹ They may accept the fact that Jesus will bring them eternal life once they die (they already believe that they will live on as one of the “living dead”), but they do not understand how their new life as a follower of Christ should impact them daily. Many African believers consider the Christian life to consist of obeying the Ten Commandments and going to church where they can continue to participate in certain required rituals. One of those rituals is frequent all-night prayer vigils along with fasting. However, these times of prayer and fasting are not aimed at getting to know God, but to manipulate him so that they can receive what they want or to ward off evil. They do not realize the fact that their redemption made it possible for them to have a personal relationship with God in which they can commune with him through prayer and Bible study.

Differences Between the Biblical Worldview and the African Worldview

In the past when missionaries led people to Christ, they often defined conversion in terms of what practices had to be abandoned from their previous religion and what had to be adopted from their new religion. These early missionaries did not realize that to disciple new believers properly they needed to take into consideration the difference

⁵¹ Grebe and Fon, *African Traditional Religion and Christian Counseling*, 12-14.

between the African worldview and the Biblical worldview. When there was a difference in worldviews, the young believers would fail to understand and apply the Biblical truths that were being taught which resulted in carnality, syncretism and stunted spiritual growth. Charles Kraft states that “syncretism is the mixing of Christian assumptions with those worldview assumptions that are incompatible with Christianity so that the result is not Biblical Christianity.”⁵²

The African worldview is revealed in the myths, rituals, and life events of the people, whereas the Biblical worldview is found in the Bible. Proper Christian spiritual formation will not occur unless the African worldview is evangelized as well. Analyzing and evaluating each worldview is vital if one is to appreciate a culture’s understanding of reality, beliefs, and behaviors. The study of religion requires analysis and comparison of worldviews because “people do things because they believe it will pay, or they believe something bad will happen if they don’t do it, or because they believe it is the right thing to do. Their beliefs mobilize their feelings and wills.”⁵³ Nothing is of greater importance to Christian spiritual formation than having a Biblical understanding of God, humanity, the cosmos and man’s place in it. It is the clash of worldviews that is at the heart of the conflict between good and evil.⁵⁴

The African worldview is ‘holistic’ for every life event is affected by ATR, and there are religious implications associated with everything. No African would view life as

⁵² Charles Kraft, “Culture, Worldview and Contextualization,” in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, 3rd ed., ed. Ralph Winter and Steven Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey, 1999), 390.

⁵³ Chalk, *Making Disciples in Africa*, 22.

⁵⁴ Chalk, *Making Disciples in Africa*, 8.

divided into the sacred and the secular for each person interacts with all parts of the universe, living and dead, and has physical and spiritual resources available to accomplish his tasks in life. Life events are interpreted more theologically since Africans believe that spiritual powers cause most everything. In ATR, man and his needs come first, and the focus is on man gaining the power he needs to live a comfortable and secure life.⁵⁵ However, in the Biblical worldview, God is the center of all and man's purpose "is to glorify God and enjoy him forever."⁵⁶

God

In both the African worldview and the Biblical worldview, God is viewed as the creator who is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent and transcendent. He exercises providential care over his creation, yet the African worldview sees him doing this mainly through the hierarchy of spirits. God is too far removed to have a relationship with mankind in the African worldview, so people are "inescapably at the whim of the forces of the universe."⁵⁷ An African would never consider calling God, Father, but a Christian realizes the intimate relationship that he has with God. The Biblical worldview sees God as being immanent and involved in each believer's life. There would be no reason to seek the ancestors or spirits instead of God when problems arise.

⁵⁵ Richard Gehman, *African Traditional Religion in Biblical Perspective* (Wheaton, IL: Oasis International LTD, 2011), 51-52.

⁵⁶ Westminster Shorter Catechism. Q&A 1, accessed October 15, 2016, www.reformed.org/documents/WSC.htm.

⁵⁷ Pieter Craffert, *Mediating Divine Powers: Perspectives on Religion in the Biblical World* (Pretoria, South Africa: Biblia Publishers, 1999), 37.

In the Bible, God reveals his immanence and presence through his Tri-unity as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It can be seen that the Lord desires to have a relationship with mankind and that the only mediator needed is his Son, Jesus Christ, who is both fully human and fully divine. It is through Jesus that a way is opened into the presence of God and through the Holy Spirit that God's love can be experienced personally.⁵⁸ The African worldview attempts to resolve the problem of God's transcendence through ancestral spirits which allow the people to have access to God through the spirit world. It is the ancestral spirits that are appeased in the hopes that they will protect and provide for the needs of the Africans.⁵⁹

Man

Both the Biblical worldview and the African worldview believe that God created man with a material body and an immaterial soul or spirit that lives on once the body dies. However, the African worldview does not believe in a bodily resurrection as the Bible teaches. The Biblical worldview reveals that when Adam and Eve sinned against God, it caused all of humanity to be born with a sin nature so that man is guilty before God who is holy, righteous and just. This sin must be atoned for otherwise man will be judged at death and suffer punishment in hell eternally. Jesus Christ became the savior for all those who believe in him for salvation.⁶⁰ The African worldview considers man to be morally neutral. He is capable of sinning, but he is not sinful. Unlike the Biblical worldview, in the African worldview sin is not committed against God and his law but

⁵⁸ Eckman, *The Truth About Worldviews*, 113-114.

⁵⁹ Grebe and Fon, *African Traditional Religion and Christian Counseling*, 10.

⁶⁰ Grebe and Fon, *African Traditional Religion and Christian Counseling*, 34.

the community. Any punishment for sin is carried out here in this life; there is no belief in heaven or hell. “The measure of right and wrong are the dictates of society and its traditions.”⁶¹ The people are more concerned about being united with their community and maintaining harmony during the here and now. Salvation in ATR involves acceptance by the community, protection from evil spirits, deliverance from physical harm, and provision of health, wealth and prestige.⁶² Life after death is to be lived as an ancestral spirit still involved in the daily activities of the family and community.

Spiritual Realm

Both worldviews believe that God created spiritual beings. The African worldview believes in both evil spirits and good spirits that can communicate and affect the lives of the people. These spirits engender great fear in the African people, and they depend upon witch-doctors, *n’angas* and *svikiro* to protect them from curses. The African people believe that many of the spirits belong to their ancestors who are there to protect and provide for them.⁶³

The Biblical worldview believes that there are holy angels that are spirit beings that serve God and his people. There are also evil spirits or demons who serve Satan who is the arch-enemy of God and mankind. There is no belief in ancestral spirits, and the Bible forbids contact with the dead.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Gehman, *African Traditional Religion in Biblical Perspective*, 256.

⁶² Gehman, *African Traditional Religion in Biblical Perspective*, 255.

⁶³ Bosman, “Shona Traditional Religion.”

⁶⁴ Grebe and Fon, *African Traditional Religion and Christian Counseling*, 36-37.

Spirituality

When comparing Christian spirituality and the spirituality that would develop in those who are part of the ATR, it is noted that there are some significant differences resulting from the worldviews held. Christian spirituality emphasizes a vertical approach and the development of an intimate relationship with the Triune God. He is seen as a personal God who is directly involved with his creation and desires for his people to come to him with their needs and problems in prayer. The doctrine of the incarnation is central to the belief that God loves mankind and wants to live among us. Jesus Christ is the only mediator needed between God and man, and he has provided salvation for all those who believe in him. Sin is viewed as anything that goes against God's nature, will and law. Believers maintain spiritual disciplines, such as prayer and Bible study, to know God and remain in a right standing with him.⁶⁵

Spirituality resulting from ATR stresses a horizontal approach with the members of one's community, including the living, the living-dead and the soon to be living. The concern of each person is to know what the community expects of them, not God. Living a good life means following the expectations, rituals, and traditions set forth by the ancestors and elders. This information has been handed down from generation to generation and is to be accepted and followed without question. If there is a problem, then the people are to go to the ancestors with prayers and sacrifices, not God.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Magesa, "African Christian Spirituality," 69-71.

⁶⁶ Magesa, "African Christian Spirituality," 71-72.

Table 1: Main Differences Between the AWW and the BWV

Main points	AWV	BWV
Hierarchy of power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hierarchy of power must remain intact for the universe to maintain harmony. • Present in the spirit world: God – ancestral spirits – spirits – humans. • Present in the physical world: Chief – elders – parents – children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God is in authority and sovereign over all creation. • All leaders and those in positions of power are still to obey God's will.
God	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spirit who created everything. • Omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent. • Far removed from creation, delegated its care to the ancestral spirits. • Does not communicate with man. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spirit who created everything. • Omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent. • Immanent and involved in his creation. • Desires to have an intimate relationship with man as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
Man	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created by God as a physical and spiritual being. • Lives on as a spirit after death. • Morally neutral, not sinful. • Sinful acts are committed against the community, living and dead, not God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created by God as a physical and spiritual being. • Bodily resurrection after death. • Morally sinful, requires a savior. • Sin is against God, even when committed against men.
Spiritual Realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many different spiritual beings, both good and evil, were created by God. • Spirits can speak to God, and they have power over man and creation. • Spirit mediums can communicate with the spirits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God created good spiritual beings, some rebelled, they are evil. • Spirits can communicate with God, but they are under God's authority. • Man is not to contact the spirit world.
Spirituality/Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis is on maintaining a good relationship with the living, the living-dead and soon to be living members of the community by fulfilling one's expected role. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis is on developing a relationship with God through Bible study, prayer, and spiritual disciplines.

Research Project

After studying the Biblical and African worldviews and comparing the beliefs of the African Traditional Religion with Christianity, the author was able to understand possible reasons for the lack of spiritual growth in the students. It was time to develop a research project to evaluate whether it was a clash of worldviews that was hindering life transformation. An explanation of the setting, the questions, hypotheses, and the objective for doing the study follows.

Setting of the Research

The study was conducted on the students at the Harare Theological College during the second term of 2017. The school was started in 1953 by missionaries from The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM). It began in an effort to train church leaders in the Zambezi Valley. However, in the 1960's, as the educational level of the people improved, and the needs of the church changed the program was moved and expanded to include Theological Education by Extension, evening classes, and it also became coeducational. In a desire to assist the growing Christian community in Zimbabwe the school initiated a three-year secondary level program that awarded a Certificate in Theology, a post-secondary level three-year Diploma in Theology program as well as a five-year Bachelor's Degree in Theology. To ensure that the school's educational standards remained at an international level, the program and curriculum utilized at HTC were patterned after those in the United States and taught by lecturers who had been educated from a Western worldview.

At the time of the research study, the school had slightly over one hundred students at all levels. Most of the student body were pastors and church leaders from the Shona tribe, and many of them had been raised and immersed in the African Traditional Religion, culture and worldview. The classes were held in the evenings since many of the students worked full-time. Due to the donations of people around the world, HTC had the second most extensive theological library in Zimbabwe, a computer lab that was available for student use, five large classrooms, and offices. HTC is an independent, interracial and evangelical interdenominational college which is reflected in the students, staff, and faculty. It is overseen by a national Board of Governors who are committed to

seeing the school continue to train its church leaders spiritually, academically, and ministerially. “HTC is Biblical in basis, evangelical in fervor, church-oriented in emphasis, evangelistic in outreach, interdenominational in cooperation, and professional in style as these qualities are viewed as important for a theological education which will result in effectiveness in Christian work.”⁶⁷

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Two research questions were asked. (1) *What aspects of the African worldview, Biblical worldview, and Western worldview were the students who attended HTC raised to believe?* (2) *Which aspects of the three differing worldviews (AWV, BWV, WWV) continued to influence the thinking and behavior of the students’ daily lives?* The researcher put forth three hypotheses. (1) The students’ worldviews would reflect aspects of the African worldview, Biblical worldview, and Western worldview. (2) The students would have some difficulty in distinguishing the different aspects of the African and Biblical worldviews. (3) The students would not be consistently practicing the spiritual disciplines they were taught in order to develop a Biblical worldview and an intimate relationship with the Lord. The author assumed that only as the students’ worldviews transformed into a Biblical worldview would they be able to apply the theology taught at HTC and utilize spiritual disciplines to develop a deepening relationship with Jesus. The investigator’s desire was to understand the students’ worldviews, find a way to help them compare their own worldviews with the Biblical worldview, and develop a plan that would facilitate

⁶⁷ Harare Theological College, “About Us,” 2011, accessed July 29, 2017, http://htc.ac.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=57:about-u.

change and spiritual growth. Only then would they be able to experience spiritual formation as Bible college students.

Significance and Objective of the Research Study

Despite the fact that over sixty-five percent of sub-Saharan Africa claims to be Christian and over a thousand new churches are being planted each month, the believers are not having a significant impact on the African culture.⁶⁸ Therefore, one must conclude that the behavior of most believers is structured more by the traditional African worldview instead of a Biblical worldview. This is understood “because worldview determines beliefs and beliefs determine behavior.”⁶⁹

There is an abundance of written material on discipleship and how to do it. Now, more literature on spiritual formation as an aspect of discipleship is being published. However, little is written on the necessity of addressing worldview in discipleship and spiritual formation. The importance of this study was to evaluate whether the educational program at HTC had helped bring about a worldview transformation in the students, thus allowing Christian spiritual growth and maturation. If they had not developed a Biblical worldview as they advanced through their program of study, then the curriculum needs to be revised so individuals can grow into the image of Christ and not just gain head knowledge.

The objective of this study was to determine whether the educational experience at HTC had altered the worldviews and spiritual practices of the students so that they

⁶⁸ Chalk, *Making Disciples in Africa*, 16.

⁶⁹ Chalk, *Making Disciples in Africa*, 16.

would be capable of leading the African church to maturity. It was also essential to find out what facets of the African worldview continued to control the thinking and behavior of the students to determine methods for improved teaching and discipling.

This study required an in-depth understanding of the African Traditional Religion (ATR), culture, and worldview and how it differs from a Biblical worldview. The worldviews of the students' needed to be assessed as well as their ability to evaluate the differences and understand the importance of changing their worldview to a Biblical worldview. Unless the students could see the difference between their African worldview and a Biblical worldview they would not be able to grow spiritually. Christian spiritual formation can only occur when the knowledge gained transforms one's entire life, but this first requires a renovation of one's worldview.

Conclusion

"A Christian worldview is a central prerequisite to Christian life that makes us complete, mature, and equipped for every good work."⁷⁰ The development of a Biblical worldview requires an understanding of Scripture and an acceptance of God's answers to life's ultimate questions as one's own. "Conversion and Christian growth involves a worldview change in which the follower of Christ comes to understand and embrace God's revelation of truth and reality."⁷¹ It is apparent that the transformation that takes place from the renewing of one's mind (Rom 12:1-2) that is involved in conversion and the process of sanctification is principally a changed worldview. Discipleship and

⁷⁰ Weerstra, "Christian Worldview Development," 14, no. 1 (January-March 1997): 11.

⁷¹ Hesselgrave, "Worldview, Scripture and Missionary Communication," 79.

spiritual formation require a transformed worldview. It is from this Biblical worldview that one's beliefs, values, and behavior should emanate.⁷²

There is truly a spiritual battle taking place here, and Satan continues to blind the hearts and minds of the people. As Georges said,

The primary instruments of spiritual warfare are God's Word and prayer. The promises of God's Word provide the spiritual resources to withstand the deception and lies of Satan's false kingdom. Prayer, when coupled with genuine faith, replaces magic rituals and sacred objects as channels of supernatural influence. Prayer relationally asks the Sovereign Creator to expand His glorious kingdom by blessing his saints on earth.⁷³

As a lecturer at the Harare Theological College in Zimbabwe, the author was faced with this battle daily. Students lived their lives in fear of evil spirits, unaware of the intimate relationship they could have with the sovereign Lord or how to develop that relationship through prayer and Bible Study. Teaching Biblical theology, hermeneutics, and spiritual disciplines were not enough to bring life transformation. It is vital that the worldview of each student be addressed so that they can see the discrepancy between a Biblical worldview and an African worldview and understand what it means to be a Christ Follower as an African.

The witness that the African church has in the world is dependent upon the spiritual maturity of its members, not its numbers. Transformation of their worldview is vital for the life of the church and Africa itself. To gain the ability to teach African Bible college students Spiritual Formation in a manner that brings about this change will require research, study, and wisdom from God.

⁷² Hesslegrave, "Worldview, Scripture and Missionary Communication," 79.

⁷³ Georges, *The 3D Gospel Ministry*, 64.

This chapter presented some of the differences between an African worldview and the Biblical worldview. The theological and Biblical foundations for spiritual formation, teaching, contextualization, worldview, and culture are covered in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 evaluates the literature that deals with teaching spiritual formation in Africa with a focus on the African worldview and the importance of worldview transformation for spiritual maturity to occur. The research project design, methods, and process as well as the results are found in Chapter 4. The author's recommendations that stemmed from the outcomes are given in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

Christian education deals with the complete developmental process of students. If an emphasis is placed on spiritual formation and developing a Biblical worldview, the result will hopefully produce men and women of God who can willingly and consciously live under the sovereignty of God in both their inner and outer worlds. However, before that can occur it is vital that the teachers first evaluate themselves to ensure that they are spiritually mature and living by a Biblical worldview. No teacher can help a student become more than what they are, as seen in Matthew 10:24-25a (NIV), “The student is not above the teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for students to be like their teachers, and servants like their masters.”

James 3:1 (NIV) states, “Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.” Scripture must be used to evaluate everything that is done and taught. What does the Bible have to say about teaching and spiritual formation? Is it Biblical to change the curriculum and contextualize class material for those in a different culture with a different worldview? Spiritual formation, teaching, contextualization, culture, and worldview are the topics that will be compared to the standard set by the Word of God.

Theological Foundation for Spiritual Theology, Spirituality and Spiritual Formation

The Bible contains the history of salvation from the beginning; first with creation, then the fall, redemption and a new creation. God created man in his image to have fellowship with himself, but with Adam’s sin the image was marred, and fellowship was

broken. Spiritual formation is the progressive process of the restoration of God's perfect image into his people. This process is known as sanctification. It begins with justification, and it is not completed until glorification occurs. The Holy Spirit transforms the inner person by integrating the Word of God into the mind, heart, soul, spirit and every dimension of the believer's life. Spirituality involves a Christian's pursuit of that intimate love relationship with God according to the Bible. The theology of spiritual formation is all about explaining that pursuit Biblically.

It seems that due to a misunderstanding of salvation the process of sanctification is being ignored. The church has misrepresented the message of the Bible so that "union with Christ" has been replaced by "beliefs about Christ." Praying the "sinner's prayer" and giving assent to orthodox Christian doctrine has taken precedence over repenting of sin, trusting in Christ and following Jesus in obedience. A.W. Tozer warned that "right opinion of God" without an increasing love and relationship with him and others does not make a person a Christian. "Satan is proof of this."¹

Traditionally the church taught that spiritual growth and knowing God occurs by learning the truths of the Bible and then applying them through the exertion of the will according to a discipleship program. However, John 15 calls for believers to maintain an abiding relationship with Jesus. It is this restful abiding that produces the intimate relationship between the Creator and the creature just as God planned from the beginning.

As Andrew Murray taught:

If, in our orthodox churches, the abiding in Christ, the living in union with Him, the experience of His daily and hourly presence and keeping were preached with the same distinctness and urgency as His atonement and pardon through His blood, I am confident that many would be found to accept with gladness the invitation to such a life, and that its influence would be manifest in their

¹ A. W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God* (Camp Hill, PA: Wing Spread Publishers, 2006), 8-9.

experience of the purity and the power, the love and the joy, the fruit-bearing, and all the blessedness which the Saviour connected with the abiding in Him.²

According to the Bible, it is this abiding relationship with Jesus that empowers the Holy Spirit to transform a believer's life.

Scripture reveals the reality of this spiritual transformation. When a person is born anew, he is a spiritual baby (John 3:3, 7; 1 Pet 1:3, 23). Just like any newborn he is expected to grow up and mature (1 Cor 2:6; 14:20; Eph 4:13-15; Phil 3:15; Col 1:28; 4:12; Heb 5:14; Jas 1:4). Most Christians do not understand that the Lord expects them to grow up and mature spiritually and develop an intimate relationship with him in the process. God initiates this maturation process (Phil 1:6; 2:13). However, believers are expected to cooperate and work with the Holy Spirit to bring about that growth (Phil 2:12). The Holy Spirit will convict Christians of the sin that keeps them from abiding continuously in Jesus (John 15:1-11; 16:8) and prevents them from bearing spiritual fruit (Gal 5:22-23). As Christians learn to walk in the Spirit (Gal 5:16-25), they will find out how to put to death the deeds of the flesh (Rom 8:1-17) and prove to be true children of God.

Spirituality is the earthly expression of that special relationship with God through Jesus Christ and is empowered by the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6). Eternal life is getting to know God here on earth (John 17:3; Phil 3:10) and living a life in a manner that is pleasing and worthy of Christ (Col 1:10). With maturity, the character of the believer is transformed (2 Cor 3:18), and increasingly follows God's ways and obeys his Word (Col 3:1-17; John 14:15-24). The holy character of Jesus Christ is progressively manifested in the attitudes and actions (Eph 5:1-2; Phil 2:5-8), and the believer will increasingly view

² Andrew Murray, *Abide in Christ* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1895), vi.

life from God's perspective or a Biblical worldview. These passages and others reveal the truth of the Christian's spiritual life and form the basis for spiritual theology.

According to Chan, "spirituality refers to the kind of life that is formed by a particular type of spiritual theology. Spirituality is the lived reality, whereas spiritual theology is the systematic reflection and formalization of that reality."³ Spiritual theology must be built upon sound systematic theology which will direct one's beliefs and behaviors as it is applied to a believer's daily walk with God.⁴ Chan is convinced that a proper spiritual theology must be globally contextualized, evangelical and bring in a charismatic perspective as well. One's doctrinal position impacts spirituality, and it is vital that it be developed on a proper conception of a Trinitarian God, sin, human nature and salvation as well as an understanding of how culture affects one's view and concept of the church.⁵ These concepts are part of one's worldview and have an enormous impact on whether one's spirituality and spiritual theology are genuinely based on sound systematic theology.

McGrath believes that spiritual theology is that which "embraces, informs and sustains spirituality" and "establishes a framework within which spirituality is to be set."⁶ Theology is "about theory," and spirituality is about "the practice."⁷ He also believes that

³ Simon Chan, *Spiritual Theology: A Systematic Study of the Christian Life* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 16.

⁴ Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 19.

⁵ Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 24-39.

⁶ Alister McGrath, *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 27-28.

⁷ McGrath, *Christian Spirituality*, 25.

three main elements of Christianity influence one's spirituality: a set of beliefs, a set of values and a way of life. However, he affirms that there is a difference between one's beliefs and knowing and experiencing God and then being transformed so that one's life reflects Christ.⁸

Peterson states that spiritual theology "represents the attention that the church community gives to keeping what we think about God (theology) in organic connection with the way we live with God (spirituality)."⁹ It is also how it is applied to the knowledge of God in daily life. It is the development of an obedient life of worshipping the Father in spirit and truth; a life of sacrifice carrying one's cross as believers follow Jesus, and a life of "love embracing and being embraced by the community of God the Spirit."¹⁰ The Father presents spirituality as part of the believer's daily life, not in an attempt at becoming a better person, but in joining God and participating with what he is doing.¹¹ This requires being committed to integrating theology into every area of a person's life by seeing the circumstances from God's perspective and obeying his will without allowing the culture to prevail. Peterson is adamant that one's experience in life must be placed under the authority of the Bible to have a proper understanding of spirituality, spiritual theology, or spiritual formation.¹² He warns that even a proper

⁸ McGrath, *Christian Spirituality*, 3-4.

⁹ Eugene Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places: A Conversation in Spiritual Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 4.

¹⁰ Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places*, 5.

¹¹ Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places*, 355.

¹² Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places*, 7.

spiritual theology can be assimilated or reduced in its effectiveness by the prevalent culture.¹³

One problem that many Bible College teachers and church leaders must discern in themselves is a stagnant spiritual life and a distant relationship with God. In these settings, one's faith often becomes intellectual and not personal. It becomes a life of service instead of intimacy. Students will struggle to learn about spiritual formation if their teachers and church leaders do not exude a vibrant and growing relationship with Jesus Christ.

Theological Foundation for Teaching

Increasing numbers of people are interested in spirituality (not necessarily Christian spirituality), and there are more spiritual formation classes available all the time. Holistic growth and development are the foundations for spiritual formation not just conveying information from a teacher to a learner. Although teaching and learning are involved in the process of spiritual development, spiritual maturity is still the desired result. As Paul says in Colossians 1:28 (ESV) "Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ." He also wrote one of the most relevant passages related to the need in Africa, for the church is filled with many false prophets and heretical teaching.

¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the

¹³ Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places*, 341.

head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. Ephesians 4:11-16 (NIV).

Both Old and New Testaments reveal that sound Biblical teaching is an important aspect of assisting believers to grow spiritually and mature in their faith. More can be learned about the Biblical principles of the teaching-learning process by examining Scripture. Deuteronomy 4:5-8 reveals that Moses taught the Israelites the Law so that they would be morally pure and spiritually mature and that other nations would take note of them and be drawn to God. Israel would be the envy of all nations due to her intimate relationship with the God of the universe. Those countries would see that Israel's God was near to the people and that he had made them wise and understanding by giving them his righteous decrees and laws.¹⁴

¹ “Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the rules—that the LORD your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, ² that you may fear the LORD your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long. ³ Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey. ⁴ “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. Deuteronomy 6:1–9 (ESV).

Deuteronomy 6 discloses that it was in the home where most of the teaching was to be done and where this life of faith was to be explained, practiced and worked out.

¹⁴ Jack S. Deere, “Deuteronomy,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 269.

Education was to take place in a context of loving relationships (parents and children), not in a cold, impersonal environment. As parents modeled a life of obedience to God's commands before their children and explained God's decrees every day, learning would take place.

¹⁰ And Moses commanded them, "At the end of every seven years, at the set time in the year of release, at the Feast of Booths, ¹¹ when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God at the place that he will choose, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. ¹² Assemble the people, men, women, and little ones, and the sojourner within your towns, that they may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, and be careful to do all the words of this law, ¹³ and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as you live in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess." Deuteronomy 31:10–13 (ESV).

Moses called for the public reading of the Law with the idea that all the people, including children, would not only hear the Law, but they would learn to fear God and obey his commands. The Hebrew concept of learning always equated the cognitive process of listening with an attitudinal change (fear God) and then behavioral transformation (obey God). The goal of the teaching-learning process was for the people of God to know him and reflect him in a holy lifestyle.¹⁵

The New Testament continues to emphasize the importance of living a life of obedience to the Lord's commands and teaching others to do the same. The Lord commands believers to "go and make disciples of all nations...teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matt 28:19a, 20a NIV). It is evident that teaching is part of the disciple-making process. However, God is calling his followers to go to the people of all nations, tongues, and tribes and teach them his commands. The call requires crossing language and cultural barriers, yet this teaching-learning process still requires

¹⁵ Perry Downs, "Theology and Education," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Christian Education*, ed. Michael Anthony (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 694.

that Biblical truth is transferred to the mind of the learner which in turn will renovate the heart's values, attitudes and emotions and that will transform the behavior of the person. Just as the Old Testament revealed, this process of teaching and discipleship is best done in contexts of secure and trusting relationships. True learning impacts the entire person and the Lord's desire is for his disciples to learn, so their lives reflect him (Col 3:10; 2 Cor. 3:18).

Teaching in an institutional setting can stifle the teaching-learning process. Too often classes are structured, and lecture is the method used to convey the information that is considered to be significant. Without developing a context where there is trust, knowledge may be transmitted, but it rarely transforms the heart and life. Students must have the opportunity to question, to discover and to watch their teacher live out their faith if spiritual growth is going to occur.

Paul writes in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (ESV) that all Scripture is authoritative and "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." The Church needs to make sure that all of Scripture is taught and presented as absolute Truth (John 8:31-32; 17:17) if a Christian worldview is to be formed and spiritual maturity is to be achieved in the lives of those being discipled (Col 2:2-3). Therefore, an adjustment must be made in the approach to teaching to fit the cultural preferences and styles, but it does not mean that the truth of the message is altered. It will be this contextualized teaching that will strengthen the African church against its syncretistic tendencies and allow believers to mature spiritually. Imasogie insists that for Christian teaching to be relevant for Africans,

the African worldview must be considered.¹⁶ Because most theologians, teachers, pastors, and missionaries have not dealt with the African worldview, the average African believer has not matured spiritually, and his commitment to Christ is only superficial.

Theological Foundation for Christian Contextualization

One of the greatest challenges educators of Biblical principles have fulfilling the Great Commission is that of communicating the Gospel in a manner that is theologically faithful and yet at the same time intelligible and culturally relevant. Biblical educators have been commanded to make disciples of the people from all nations. Discipleship requires teaching all that Christ commanded in an understandable manner that enables believers to grow and mature in their faith so that they can obey the Lord and live a life worthy of the Gospel (Col 1:10; Phil 1:27). This requires that the Gospel is contextualized and presented in a culturally relevant way.

“Christian contextualization can be thought of as the attempt to communicate the message of the person, works, Word, and will of God in a way that is faithful to God’s revelation, especially as it is put forth in the teachings of Holy Scripture, and that is meaningful to respondents in their respective cultural and existential contexts.”¹⁷ It is vital that Jesus Christ is presented so that those with different worldviews are still able to understand how to experience and apply the Word to every life situation.¹⁸ To be

¹⁶ Osadolor Imasogie, *Guidelines for Christian Theology in Africa* (Achimota, Ghana: African Christian Press, 1983), 23-24.

¹⁷ David Hesselgrave, “Contextualization that is Authentic and Relevant,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 12, no. 3 (July-September 1995): 115.

¹⁸ Ed Stetzer, “What is Contextualization? Presenting the Gospel in Culturally Relevant Ways,” *Christianity Today* (Oct 2014), accessed September 26, 2015, www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2014/october/what-is-contextualization.html.

effective in this process, one must carefully address the Biblical text as well as the receiving culture. Applying proper exegetical and hermeneutical principles is vital if the authorial intent is to be found and applied accurately.¹⁹ After Scripture is accurately interpreted according to the authorial intent, contextualization occurs as it is revealed to the people of the receiving culture as to how it is relevant and can be applied to all relationships and areas of life.²⁰ Hebrews 1-2 reveals how Christ is God's perfect example of contextualization as the Lord presented his heavenly message to humanity through the God-man Jesus.²¹

“No universal principle will be able to be well communicated to a group or distinct social segment without it being contextualized.”²² The greatest example of contextualization is the incarnation of Jesus. The Son came to earth to reveal the Father, and he did it by living out his message within the Jewish culture. Therefore, his message was not only relevant, but it was also understandable, and it brought about spiritual transformation in many lives. He was still faithful to how God revealed himself in the Scriptures. In Matthew 24:14 (ESV) Jesus prophesies that “this Gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations” indicating that what was preached would have to be in the language and context of those who hear. That does not mean that the Gospel needs to be rewritten, but it does need to be translated in a manner that allows everyone in that context to understand the historical and Biblical

¹⁹ Hesselgrave, “Contextualization That is Authentic and Relevant,” 119.

²⁰ Richard Engle, “Contextualization in Missions: A Biblical and Theological Appraisal,” *Grace Theological Journal* 4, no.1 (1983): 85.

²¹ Engle, “Contextualization in Missions: A Biblical and Theological Appraisal,” 93.

²² Ronaldo Lidorio, “Biblical Theology of Contextualization,” accessed September 26, 2015, http://ronaldo.lidorio.com.br/eng/index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=41.

Savior. This is the goal of contextualization, to present Christ and God's Word without diluting the truth.²³

As one studies the New Testament, it becomes evident that a clash of cultures took place in the early church and contextualization can be seen taking place throughout the New Testament. In Acts 2 the Lord enables 120 Jews to preach the Gospel in as many as fifteen separate languages, revealing the importance of hearing the Gospel in one's own language. Phillip, a Hellenistic deacon, evangelizes Samaritans and an Ethiopian official in Acts 7-8. Peter has to conquer his cultural biases to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles as commanded by the Lord in Acts 10. Acts 11 reveals Hellenistic believers from Cyprus and Cyrene who are evangelizing Greeks which resulted in a multicultural church with Gentile tendencies and problems. Therefore, the Jerusalem church sent Barnabas, a Levite born in Cyprus, who then brought Saul who had strong ties to the Judaic, Greek and Roman worlds to assist them. The Holy Spirit selected these two men to become the first cross-cultural missionaries for they had already proved their ability to relate to multi-cultural settings by finding common ground as points of contact.²⁴

It is vital that believers understand "the essential repeatability and the necessity for repetition of the process whereby Paul bridged over to the Greek culture."²⁵ Christian educators can also see the process of contextualization as Paul, a devout Jew, called to be an apostle to the Gentiles (Gal 1:16) preaches to three different groups. Paul is preaching to Jews in Acts 9:19-22; using the Scriptures, he speaks to them about the God of

²³ Lidorio, "Biblical Theology of Contextualization."

²⁴ Engle, "Contextualization in Missions: A Biblical and Theological Appraisal," 94-95.

²⁵ Ralph Winter, "Christian History in Cross-Cultural Perspective," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 12, no. 3 (July-September 1995): 129.

Promise who brought them out of Egypt. It is this God who promised to send the Messiah, and Paul demonstrates that Jesus is the Christ through their Scriptures. In Acts 13:14-41 Paul speaks to a mixed group of Jewish and Gentile believers. Here Paul speaks to them about the God of the promises and history of Israel, but it is this God who sent the Messiah to come for the salvation of everyone who believes. Paul is preaching to Gentiles who have no knowledge of the Scriptures in Acts 17:16-31, so he focuses on the evidence of God in creation and the unknown god whom they worship. Paul tells them of God's attributes and how the Lord sustains humanity and the universe; he is sovereign, immanent and forgiving, but he will judge all mankind and requires that they repent and believe in the Messiah he sent.²⁶ In each situation, Paul made sure that he presented his message in a culturally relevant way knowing that he was dealing with different worldviews.

Until Jesus is no longer seen as a foreign god to those who are receiving the Gospel they will not be able to develop spiritually. "To contextualize the Gospel is to translate it in such a way that the lordship of Christ will not be only an abstract principle or a mere imported doctrine, but a determining factor for life in all its dimensions and the basic criterion in relation to the cultural values that form the substance with which we experience human existence."²⁷ A contextualized theology that is taught in Zimbabwe must be designed for a fear-based and shame-based culture. It must address ancestor veneration, witchcraft, prophets, polygamy, AIDS, poverty, and many other relevant issues. Otherwise, it will not apply to the church. Today the African church is filled with

²⁶ Lidorio, "Biblical Theology of Contextualization."

²⁷ Lidorio, "Biblical Theology of Contextualization."

Christian nominalism and religious syncretism due to the preaching of the Word with a lack of cultural understanding making the Gospel weak and inapplicable to life.²⁸ Only when the Gospel is meeting Africans' deepest spiritual needs, and they can worship in a manner with which they are comfortable with, will they be committed to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Theological Foundation for Culture

As the universal Church has gradually become less Western and more non-Western, there has been a greater awareness of tension and disharmony. It is now becoming evident to church leaders in the United States that they must be able to deal with diversity, multiple perspectives and the issues that arise from multiculturalism. Theologians have had to step forward to address the theology of cultural diversity and assist the church in understanding the topic Biblically.

Culture is thought of as ideas, feelings, and mores or ethical standards that direct society's actions. It explains why the people in a community think and feel a certain way about God, the world and the rest of humanity.²⁹ The missiologist Scott Moreau defines culture as,

A total complex, involving 1) our world view, which refers to a set of assumptions through which we filter our perceptions of life; 2) a methodological plan embodying functional, structural, and cognitive elements for applying those assumptions in interpreting and explaining everything around us as well as determining how to live in the world; and 3) the manifestations of the assumptions and methodological plan, seen in the system of living exhibited by the people of the culture (the symbolic and ecological elements).³⁰

²⁸ Lidorio, "Biblical Theology of Contextualization."

²⁹ Harvie Conn, "Culture," in *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, ed. Scott Moreau, Harold Netland, and Charles van Engen (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 253.

³⁰ Scott Moreau, "The Human Universals of Culture: Implications for Contextualization," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 12, no. 3 (July-September 1995): 121.

Culture in and of itself is neither good or evil, but a mixture of both. Since mankind was created in the image of God and is the recipient of common grace, there are positive features in all cultures, even those that are non-Christian. The tenth point of the Lausanne Covenant states,

Culture must always be tested and judged by Scripture. Because men and women are God's creatures, some of their culture is rich in beauty and goodness. Because they are fallen, all of it is tainted with sin and some of it is demonic. The Gospel does not presuppose the superiority of any culture to another, but evaluates all cultures according to its own criteria of truth and righteousness, and insists on moral absolutes in every culture.³¹

The theology of culture reveals God as the creator of physical and social culture for he instituted marriage, work, and government in Genesis 1-2. He is also the sustainer of culture according to Colossians 1:17 and Hebrews 1:3. God continues to sustain and work in culture due to his love for mankind and his desire to live in relationship with people. He is a holy God who wants all human cultures to reflect his nature (1 Pet 1:16). Satan has opposed God's work from the beginning and has been active in contorting human culture so that believers will fall away from God. When Satan led Adam and Eve to sin against God, it resulted in the alienation of self, others, creation, and God. The devil still holds control over culture and is called "the god of this age" (2 Cor 4:4, NIV). However, God sent Jesus Christ as the redeemer and transformer of culture as well as God's designated sovereign over culture. Only Christ can restore mankind and his culture to all that God intended.³²

³¹ Lausanne Movement, "Lausanne Covenant," accessed October 8, 2015, <http://www.lausanne.org/content/covenant/lausanne-covenant>.

³² Gailyn Van Rhee, "A Theology of Culture: Desecularizing Anthropology," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 14, no. 1 (January-March 1997): 33-38.

When assessing the theology of cultural diversity, it is important that the reader begin with the creation story in Genesis 1-2. “Closely associated with the *imago Dei* is what has been called humanity’s ‘cultural mandate,’ a charge to imitate the Creator by creating civilization.”³³ God’s command to rule over and subdue the earth (Gen.1:26, 28; Ps 8:4-8), to work and care for the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:15), and to name the animals (Gen 2:19-20) gave mankind the impetus to develop human culture. God declared his creation to be “very good” (Gen 1:31) indicating his pleasure in allowing humans to express themselves culturally. For the Lord allowed Adam and Eve to have a significant amount of freedom in choosing what to eat, what to name the animals and how to exercise “dominion” (Gen 2:16-19). From that point on, each people-group developed means to express themselves distinctly to bring order over chaos just as God did.³⁴

Genesis 3-4 describe the consequences of Adam’s sin and how man’s cultural expressions, including agriculture, the arts, law, and city life became subject to corruption. Genesis 10 makes the theological point that all mankind descended from Noah as well as Adam. The Biblical worldview holds to the fact that all people groups share equally in the image of God so that there is unity in the diversity. Genesis 11 reveals the Lord developing cultural variety even more by imposing linguistic diversity and geographical dispersion to ensure that man filled the whole earth as he was commanded (Gen 1:28).³⁵

³³ Frank Chan, “A Theology of Cultural Diversity: A Proposal,” Nyack College, accessed June 09, 2016, https://www.nyack.edu/files/Chan_Biblical_Materials_Cultural_Diversity.doc.

³⁴ Chan, “A Theology of Cultural Diversity.”

³⁵ Chan, “A Theology of Cultural Diversity.”

The book of Exodus reveals that God's people were never ethnically homogenous. It was a "mixed crowd" that left Egypt in the Exodus (Ex 12:38, NRSV), and the covenant God made with the people included foreigners and aliens. In the New Testament, Jesus reached out to those of different ethnic groups, and his parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:37) revealed him believing and acting on the concept of racial equality. Galatians 3:8 reveals how God planned on blessing all nations through Abraham. Matthew 28:18-20 insists that the Church today should have a universal character as it continues to expand and embrace people from all the cultures of the world. The Church should recognize God's delight in cultural diversity, but also realize he demands unity among the diversity (Eph 4:3-6). The ability to keep unity requires an understanding of culture's fallen nature and the need for cultural sensitivity and racial reconciliation. "Because the Gospel is universal, it must become contextualized to each culture it encounters. And because the Church is universal, it must become progressively more diverse as it expands and embraces new cultures. Cultural diversity therefore cannot and must not be avoided if a Gospel-centered Church is to be faithful to its true nature."³⁶

Theological Foundation for Worldview

Scripture supports the fact that God ordained culture, but to be able to contextualize the Gospel for each culture requires a deeper understanding of what it is. Kwast believes that there are several successive layers involved in culture.³⁷ The first outer layer deals with behavior. It describes what the people do in any situation. The next

³⁶ Chan, "A Theology of Cultural Diversity."

³⁷ Lloyd Kwast, "Understanding Culture," in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement a Reader*, ed. Ralph Winter and Steven Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1981), 363-364.

layer answers the question as to what are the cultural values which help to explain their behavior. Then the layer that reveals the cultural beliefs is reached; this is the layer that explains what matters to the people. The center of every culture is its worldview which defines the beliefs that dictate the decisions and behavior of the people. Kwast insists that there can be no alteration in the lives and hearts of people until their worldview has been significantly changed.³⁸ This was the problem that was dealt with at HTC. No matter how much Biblical teaching was done, very little spiritual development occurred until the students' worldview was changed to a Biblical worldview. Effective cross-cultural education and discipleship in Zimbabwe require understanding the difference between the African culture and worldview, a Western worldview and the Biblical worldview.

According to Eckman, Christianity is a worldview, not just a relationship with God through faith in Jesus. This worldview teaches believers how to think about everything, including theology, morality, science, history, and literature.³⁹ Since God has given mankind the Bible which contains the answers to the essential questions of life, one can understand reality as God intended. It is vital that all people come to some conclusion as to what reality is, how humanity is part of it as well as what happens when they die, and how they can have peace with the questions they are asking.

For Christians to become complete, mature and equipped for every good work (2 Tim 3:16-17), they must first develop a Biblical worldview. Developing a Christian worldview requires an acceptance of God's Word and an understanding of his answers to

³⁸ Kwast, "Understanding Culture," 363-364.

³⁹ James P. Eckman, "Christianity as a Worldview," in *The Truth About Worldviews* (Wheaton, IL: Evangelical Training Association, 2006), 113.

the questions of life.⁴⁰ John Stott states, “The Bible does not just contain the Gospel; it is the Gospel. Through the Bible God is himself actually evangelizing, that is communicating the good news in the world...All Scripture preaches the Gospel; God evangelizes through it.”⁴¹ So the starting point for Christian evangelism and discipleship which will bring about a worldview transformation should be the Bible and Biblical theology.⁴²

Christian spiritual formation transforms the inner person so that they become Christlike and learn to choose lifestyles that reflect Jesus’ ways.⁴³ The development of a Biblical worldview is the “lifelong process of learning to understand and relate to one’s external world in ways that reflect God’s sovereignty over all reality.”⁴⁴ This worldview is the firm foundation that is saturated with God’s Word so that one’s understanding and response to life experiences are consistent with God’s revelation. Christian spiritual formation and the development of a Biblical worldview are related. “They involve looking like Christ and seeing like Christ: experiencing the progressive transformation of one’s internal reality while having one’s perception of external reality transformed to be consistent with the way things really are.”⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Hans Weerstra, “Christian Worldview Development,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 14, no. 1 (January-March 1997): 11.

⁴¹ John Stott, “The Bible in World Evangelization,” in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement a Reader*, 3rd ed., ed. Ralph Winter and Steven Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1999): A3.

⁴² David Hesselgrave, “Worldview, Scripture and Missionary Communication,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 14, no. 2 (April-June 1997): 80.

⁴³ M. Robert Mulholland Jr., *Invitation to a Journey: A Roadmap for Spiritual Formation* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1993), 82.

⁴⁴ C. S. Erdvig, “Looking Like Christ, Seeing Like Christ” *CSE* 20, no. 1 (2016/17): 14.

⁴⁵ Erdvig, “Looking Like Christ, Seeing Like Christ,” 15.

Luke 6:46-49 reveals the importance of developing a strong foundation on Jesus to be able to stand firm in rough times. This strong foundation is a Biblical worldview which goes to the deepest level of one's life. Having a Christian worldview will ensure that a person not only listens to God's Word but believes and obeys his Word (Jas 1:22-25). To accept Christ without developing a Biblical worldview is like the man who builds on the ground without a good foundation. The propaganda that is taught today can erode any foundation that is not secured down deep. Societies and cultures need to do the same thing if they are to survive the destructive forces in this world. This points to a great and urgent need of assisting believers to develop a Biblical worldview.⁴⁶

In Luke 24:25-27 Jesus rebukes his disciples because they should have been acting upon the truth they knew instead of being "foolish." He opens up their hearts to understand the Old Testament Scriptures and helps them develop a Biblical worldview. Jesus wanted to make sure all of his disciples understood how all of the Scriptures spoke of him (Luke 24:44-49). Just as the Lord "opened their minds to understand the Scriptures," he must also do the same for us.⁴⁷

"Conversion and Christian growth involves a worldview change in which the Follower of Christ comes to understand and embrace God's revelation of truth and reality."⁴⁸ It is apparent that the transformation that takes place from the renewing of one's mind (Rom 12:1-2) that is involved in conversion and the process of sanctification is principally a changed worldview. Discipleship and spiritual formation require a

⁴⁶ Weerstra, "Christian Worldview Development," 3.

⁴⁷ Weerstra, "Christian Worldview Development," 9-10.

⁴⁸ Hesselgrave, "Worldview, Scripture and Missionary Communication," 79.

transformed worldview. It is from this Biblical worldview that one's beliefs, values, and behavior emanate.⁴⁹

It is only as the Gospel is presented to people in their language and cultural context that the Holy Spirit can work in their hearts so that they can respond appropriately. Unless they understand the Gospel when it is presented, their worldview will not be transformed so they can grow and mature spiritually. No humanly created worldview is capable of fully explaining or understanding the Gospel. They all fall short of the worldview presented in the Bible. "The Gospel itself challenges all worldviews, and calls for their transformation."⁵⁰

The Old Testament reveals that God worked to develop a worldview in which the Gospel could be proclaimed through people that he prepared to be his witnesses. It is vital that the Gospel message speaks into the matters of a person's worldview or else it remains superficial and transient. Worldviews deal with the foundational topics of life and are the basis of what people believe to be reality and truth. The early church's worldview was formed on a common conviction of God, sin, sacrifice, salvation and God's revealed truth from the Old Testament. Hiebert feels that culture can be compared to an iceberg. The portion of the iceberg that is seen can be equated to the behaviors and beliefs of the people. However, the larger portion that lies beneath the surface and holds the iceberg up is the worldview. He states, "If we convert only beliefs and behavior, in

⁴⁹ Hesselgrave, "Worldview, Scripture and Missionary Communication," 79.

⁵⁰ Paul Hiebert, "Conversion and Worldview Transformation," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 14, no. 2 (April-June 1997): 84.

time the worldview will take the Christian beliefs captive. The result is ‘Christo-paganism.’”⁵¹

The Barna Research Group has demonstrated over and over again the impact worldview has on one’s life and behavior. In 2009 they compared their research done on Americans, from the previous 13 years, and concluded,

Overall, the current research revealed that only 9% of all American adults have a Biblical worldview...The current study found that less than one-half of one percent of adults in the Mosaic generation – i.e., those aged 18 to 23 – have a Biblical worldview, compared to about one out of every nine older adults...Ongoing research by The Barna Group on these matters consistently demonstrates the powerful impact a person’s worldview has on their life. A worldview serves as a person’s decision-making filter, enabling them to make sense of the complex and huge amount of information, experiences, relationships and opportunities they face in life. By helping to clarify what a person believes to be important, true and desirable, a worldview has a dramatic influence on a person’s choices in any given situation.⁵²

To effectively communicate the Good News to Africans requires openly contrasting the African worldview with that of the Biblical worldview. They must be allowed to compare their traditional African understanding of God, the origin of the universe, humanity, sin, salvation, spirituality, and the destiny of mankind and his universe with the Bible.⁵³ Teaching them how to utilize solid hermeneutical and exegetical principles to study Scripture and develop a Biblical worldview is vital. It is only as a person studies Scripture to evaluate the validity of his faith with a willingness to change that his worldview will be transformed. A Christian Biblically based worldview is

⁵¹ Hiebert, “Conversion and Worldview Transformation,” 84.

⁵² Barna Group, “Barna Survey Examines Changes in Worldview Among Christians Over the Past 13 Years,” (2009), accessed September 26, 2015, <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/21-transformation/252-barna-survey-examines-changes-in-worldview-among-christians-over-the-past-13-years>.

⁵³ Hesselgrave, “Contextualization that is Authentic and Relevant,” 117.

one in which the believer goes to the Word of God to answer all his questions on ultimate reality so that all values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors are scriptural. It is imperative that those who teach and disciple Africans have a strong Biblical worldview that is non-Western and non-secular and that they understand the importance of worldviews and the difference in them. The teacher must also have a solid Biblical theology which supports and forms that worldview.

“Everything we think and do is ultimately controlled by our worldview.”⁵⁴ The process of digging deep foundations requires obedience of faith so that as believers study and learn what God’s Word says, they develop a solid Biblical worldview and live it. “If we never obey the Word of God, or if we never really use it in our lives, we will remain perpetual babes, always needing milk instead of solid food. In this state, Christians will never grow up nor ever get the wisdom needed to discern what is good from what is evil” (Heb 5:12-14).⁵⁵

Too many believers may hold onto Christian beliefs but live as traditional Africans.⁵⁶ It is in the time of crisis that one’s worldview is seen for it is then that people turn to what is truly at the center of their lives. African Christians continue to go to the *n’anga* or witchdoctor when faced with disaster or death and go to participate in rituals and sacrifices made to the ancestors. There is polygamy, physical and sexual abuse, addictions, witchcraft and demonization all within the African church and even in the students at HTC. Most of these people have “prayed the sinner’s prayer,” they believe

⁵⁴ Hans Weerstra, “Christian Worldview Development: Part II,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 14, no. 2 (April-June 1997): 51.

⁵⁵ Weerstra, “Christian Worldview Development,” 11.

⁵⁶ Weerstra, “Christian Worldview Development: Part II,” 51-54.

that God loves them, and that Jesus died for their sins so they can have eternal life.

However, they continue to view life through the lens of their African culture. They may be “born again” believers, but their worldview has not been transformed, and their lives do not reflect the life they are meant to be living. Worldview is not a topic that is dealt with in most of the material written on spiritual formation, but it is one of the most critical areas to focus on if believers are going to grow spiritually and live a Christ-like life in any country or culture.

Conclusion

Every Christian teacher needs to evaluate their beliefs, attitudes, and actions by the standard of Scripture before teaching their students. Believers are instructed to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor 10:5), but teachers especially need to ensure that their lives are like Christ’s and that their students can follow their example (1 Cor 11:1). No matter what subject is being taught, the focus should be the spiritual growth of the student through the development of a Biblical worldview. Spiritual maturity is the goal of sanctification and teachers are a vital part of this life-long process. As students are presented with the truths found in Scripture in a contextualized manner so that it is understandable and applicable, their worldview will be transformed, their relationship with God will deepen, and their lives will reflect Christ. When a teacher is working in a cross-cultural setting, it is vital that the students can discover God’s truth by asking questions, discussing applications and living life together so that they can see pertinent examples.

Contextualization is necessary if the truth of the Gospel is going to be communicated in a manner that is relevant and intelligible. Instructors must be able to

accurately interpret Scripture and explain the truths and principles taught that apply to each culture. Spiritual maturity depends on one's ability to base beliefs, values, and way of life on the Word of God. Jesus contextualized the Father's message through the incarnation and lived within a Jewish culture so that people's lives would be transformed. Teachers and pastors must also present Christ and God's Word relevantly without diluting the truth.

God is the creator and sustainer of culture, and he has allowed each people-group to develop their own ways of expressing themselves and bringing order to their environment. However, man is fallen, so his culture is also tainted with sin. Satan continues to work to control culture, but Jesus Christ came to redeem and transform it. The Church must remember that God desires unity in the body of Christ despite all of the cultural diversity (Eph 4:3-6). The Church has been commissioned to go into the world and make disciples in every culture and nation (Matt 28:18-20). To fulfill that mandate requires focusing on each person's worldview being transformed into a Biblical worldview. The worldview is at the center of each culture and answers the main questions of life. There can be cultural differences in the church as long as every believer understands reality as God intended. Spiritual growth and maturity require Biblical, contextualized teaching in a safe environment where the students can seek the answers to life and watch their teacher live an exemplary life. No matter what culture the teacher and student find themselves in, their worldviews must be addressed and transformed so that their lives are built on the firm foundation of Jesus Christ. The next chapter presents what the scholars have written on spiritual formation and worldview.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Despite the fact that there is a Biblical basis for spiritual formation, very little literature was written by Protestant authors on the subject before 1970. As the concept of discipleship became popular Christian spirituality became more of a focus as well. It was also around that time that missiologists began to research and write on the topic of worldview and specifically the development of a Biblical worldview. However, one will not find much written about the importance of prioritizing the transformation of one's worldview for spiritual growth and maturation to occur. Missionaries are beginning to realize the impact of worldview on spirituality, but ministers in the West seem unaware. If the universal Church is going to become all that Christ desires, church leaders around the world must begin to address the worldview of their congregants. This chapter reviews literature written by leading authors on spiritual formation, including doctrines and spiritual disciplines utilized to mature. It also looks at literature written on the importance of developing a Biblical worldview to prevent syncretism and grow spiritually.

Christian Spirituality or Spiritual Formation

Contextualized Biblical Theology as the Basis of Spiritual Formation

Chapter 2 covered the Biblical and theological foundations for spiritual formation and explained how it is part of the process of sanctification. From the moment of spiritual birth until physical death, the Lord expects believers to grow and mature in their faith and become more like Jesus. The focus of this life transformation is the development of an

intimate relationship with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Spirituality is about a life of faith that is lived by a believer, so that relationship with God is sustained and enhanced. In his book *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction*, Alistair McGrath states that “Christian spirituality concerns the quest for a fulfilled and authentic Christian existence, involving the bringing together of the fundamental ideas of Christianity and the whole experience of living on the basis of and within the scope of the Christian faith.”¹ Christian spirituality is influenced by theology, historical variables, personal issues, denominational differences, and personal attitudes to the world, culture, and history.² Biblical theology should provide the proper context for spirituality. Even McGrath admits that there is tension between Western theology and Christian spirituality: this is the case in Africa. The vital doctrines of creation, human nature and destiny, the Trinity, the incarnation, redemption, the resurrection, and consummation can be understood and applied in various ways depending on whether or not they have been contextualized for the receiving culture and that can have a strong influence on one’s spirituality.³ Africans especially find it difficult to comprehend and live by these doctrines which have been presented from a Western worldview. Until systematic and Biblical theology answer the questions and concerns that Africans have and give them methods to live out their faith in an African context, they will struggle to develop spiritually.

¹ Alistair McGrath, *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publisher, 1999), 2.

² McGrath, *Christian Spirituality*, 8-9.

³ McGrath, *Christian Spirituality*, 27-28.

Simon Chan, who writes from an Asian perspective in *Spiritual Theology: A Systematic Study of the Christian Life*, agrees with McGrath that spiritual theology or doctrine must first be globally contextualized if believers around the world are going to grow in their faith. He attempts to explain the spiritual implications of church doctrine and its implementation in the lives of those from different cultures and worldviews.⁴ Believers around the world consider certain doctrines as having more bearing on one's spirituality, but most emphasize the importance of comprehending the Trinity, sin, humanity, and salvation. It is vital for believers living in an animistic society to have a proper understanding of all four of those doctrines, but they must be contextualized before they can be applied. In a shame-based culture sin is a breach of relationships between people, not man and God. Salvation means doing whatever it takes to bring peace and harmony back to all the village members, living or dead. There are many cultural barriers to spirituality, but most Christians are ignorant of the differences in culture or the importance of helping all believers develop a Biblical worldview while discipling them. Very little spiritual growth can take place in believers who do not base their beliefs and actions on a proper systematic theology that is Biblical and contextualized.

Many consider the most important doctrines to be those dealing with God, man, sin, and salvation. A Western worldview that focuses on individualism does not always consider the doctrine of the church to be as important. In fact, McGrath does not mention it in his book. However, Chan asserts that community is essential to the Southern and

⁴ Simon Chan, *Spiritual Theology: A Systematic Study of the Christian Life* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 16.

Eastern worldviews. A Biblical theology of the visible church is vital if believers are going to be able to grow spiritually in relation with one another as patterned by the Trinity. Today in the West “there is little sense of the church as a corporate, spiritual reality existing in and through time,” yet this is an important cultural need for those in the South.⁵ The church is not to be a collection of people who profess Christ as savior, meeting their own spiritual needs, and growing in isolation. A proper Biblical understanding of the visible church needs to address the fact that it is a corporate reality not just a “collectivity of individuals.”⁶ As a part of the church, spiritual growth is to occur in a loving and supportive community.

Community is a central concept in Africa, whether talking about the extended family, the village, or the tribe. However, it seems that the various denominations have created division and seclusion among believers. In the book *Streams of Living Water*, Richard Foster writes to remind Christians of the importance of not living in isolation. When believers become “cut off from the rest of the Christian community” they lose a “balanced vision of life and faith;” this is an issue that plagues the evangelical church.⁷ He believes that the Holy Spirit is “bringing together streams of life that have been isolated from one another for a very long time.”⁸ He writes of six Christian Traditions or historical movements that reveal differing dimensions of the spiritual life, all of which should be a part of the mature believer’s life. Foster focuses on the commonalities and

⁵ Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 103.

⁶ Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 105.

⁷ Richard Foster, *Prayer: Finding the Heart’s True Home* (San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 1992), xv.

⁸ Foster, *Prayer*, xv.

shared foundations of all six traditions to encourage understanding and unity in the Body of Christ whether Catholic, Orthodox, or Protestant. The Lord desires unity in the Church despite the diversity which includes a rich heritage of traditions, cultures and ethnic groups.

Bible Study and Spiritual Formation

Contextualized Biblical theology is the basis for a sound Christian spirituality. However, there are also practices that can enhance one's spiritual growth and assist in developing an intimate relationship with the Lord so that one can glorify and enjoy him forever.⁹ The foundation for this loving union with God always starts with the practices of Bible study and prayer. As Christ's followers study the Word and pray according to the Scriptures, they will develop and grow in unity as the Lord desires. Due to the African worldview that God is so transcendent that man cannot communicate or relate to him, most Zimbabweans have difficulty with these two spiritual disciplines.

Eugene Peterson insists that for spiritual growth to occur in the lives of believers, they must be saturated in the text of the Bible. In *Eat This Book* he writes,

Christian spirituality is, in its entirety, rooted in and shaped by the scriptural text. We don't form our personal spiritual lives out of a random assemblage of favorite texts in combination with individual circumstances; we are formed by the Holy Spirit in accordance with the text of Holy Scripture. God does not put us in charge of forming our personal spiritualities. We grow in accordance with the revealed Word implanted in us by the Spirit.¹⁰

It is paramount that one's life experiences are placed under the authority of the Bible to have a proper understanding of Christian spirituality, spiritual theology, or spiritual

⁹ Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 126.

¹⁰ Eugene Peterson, *Eat This Book: A Conversation on the Art of Spiritual Reading* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 15.

formation. However, Peterson insists that it will require “eating,” not just reading the Bible for it to impact one’s spiritual life.¹¹ Despite the fact that there is growing interest in spiritual formation Peterson feels that there has not been an increased concern on reading the Bible correctly: reading that will allow one to taste, chew, swallow and digest God’s Word so that it is assimilated into one’s very being.¹²

Spiritual theology, using Scripture as text, does not present us with a moral code and tell us ‘Live up to this’; nor does it set out a system of doctrine and say, ‘Think like this, and you will live well.’ The biblical way is to tell a story and in the telling invite: ‘Live into this-this is what it looks like to be human in this God-made and God-ruled world; this is what is involved in becoming and maturing as a human being.’¹³

Proper exegesis must be done when studying the Bible, with emphasis on the discipline of listening and responding to the text, not so much the intellectual, academic work of dissecting the passage that is taught in Bible school.¹⁴ Peterson insists that improper Bible reading has done much damage and he encourages the use of *Lectio Divina* which can train a person how to read Scripture rightly by being attentive and participating fully. By learning to read the text (*lectio*), meditate on it (*meditatio*), pray the text (*oratio*) and live the text out (*contemplatio*), the believer finds that it is no longer a spiritual discipline, but a way of life of being continually attentive to God’s voice.¹⁵

Many other authors such as Michael Casey also believe that by helping the Church rediscover the ancient practice of *Lectio Divina* Christians will have a better

¹¹ Peterson, *Eat This Book*, 16-17.

¹² Peterson, *Eat This Book*, 10.

¹³ Peterson, *Eat This Book*, 43.

¹⁴ Peterson, *Eat This Book*, 50.

¹⁵ Peterson, *Eat This Book*, 84, 91.

chance of growing spiritually.¹⁶ The church has failed Africans in that it has not taught them how to study the Bible and pray correctly. Being an “oral culture” Africans do not always understand why reading and studying the Bible should be a vital part of their spiritual life. To develop and grow spiritually requires that the Bible be read properly to hear God’s voice speaking from his Word. Believers need to come to his Word with open hearts that are ready to be transformed and humble wills that are prepared to obey. Casey maintains that it is crucial that one book is studied at a time, slowly and comprehensively, omitting nothing. The Bible is to be read with patience and a desire to meet God by keeping one’s eyes and ears open, ready to listen and talk with the Sovereign Lord.¹⁷

In *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places*, Peterson asserts that spirituality is God’s command to “prepositional-participation” with him.¹⁸ Chris Webb is more interested in helping Christians to respond to God’s invitation: “not to explain God but to experience God.”¹⁹ In his book, *The Fire of the Word*, Webb agrees with Casey that it is vital to learn to read in a way that will allow the meeting with “God on the holy ground of Scripture.”²⁰ The students at HTC were trained to dissect the Bible as a theological textbook, but they were not warned that “it is a thin place through which the presence of God breaks into this world and bursts with unpredictable consequences into our lives. Even though it is

¹⁶ Michael Casey, *Sacred Reading: The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina* (Liguori, MO: Liguori/Triumph, 1996), v.

¹⁷ Casey, *Sacred Reading*, 5-9.

¹⁸ Eugene Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places: A Conversation in Spiritual Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 335.

¹⁹ Chris Webb, *The Fire of the Word: Meeting God on Holy Ground* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 21.

²⁰ Webb, *The Fire of the Word*, 28.

not consumed, this book burns with unquenchable fire.”²¹ The students learned how to exegete a passage to find the exact meaning, but not how to open their lives up to coming face to face with God.²² It is time for the exegetical method taught in Bible colleges and seminaries to be revised if spiritual formation and growth are going to occur.

Webb attempts to show that the Bible was given to mankind so that God could be known intimately. Contemplative Bible reading and contemplative prayer are two disciplines that will teach the art of dwelling in the presence of God. These practices can transform believers so that they can rest in God’s arms, rejoicing to be in his loving presence.²³ Until HTC students can come to the Word of God as lovers, waiting to be embraced and kissed by God, instead of students studying for a grade, life transformation will not be seen. When considering spiritual formation, Webb insists that studying God’s Word is only part of the spiritual discipline of learning to draw near to the God who loves his children. As his followers come humbly into his presence with empty hands, expecting to meet him, he “transforms” them.²⁴

Once again, none of this makes sense to those who live with an African worldview. God is unapproachable and unknowable, only the spirits of the ancestors are capable of speaking to him, and no written document reveals him to mankind. Without a worldview conversion and renovation, there can be no Christian spirituality.

²¹ Webb, *The Fire of the Word*, 31.

²² Webb, *The Fire of the Word*, 33.

²³ Webb, *The Fire of the Word*, 185.

²⁴ Webb, *The Fire of the Word*, 28.

Prayer and Spiritual Formation

The Biblical worldview holds that the primary purpose of prayer is to develop an intimate relationship with God. According to Foster, “real prayer comes not from gritting our teeth but from falling in love...” for “prayer is nothing more than an ongoing and growing love relationship with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”²⁵ Yancey asserts that it is in prayer that God and man can meet.²⁶ Crabb feels believers are privileged to be able to bring their requests to God, yet he insists that the point of prayer is to relate to God. He maintains that “prayer is our opportunity to build a passionate relationship with God, to know Him well.”²⁷ “Only when you present yourself authentically to God, attend to who He is, and purge yourself of self-obsession will you approach God to humbly and gratefully receive the greatest gift of all: a relationship with God as your Papa!”²⁸

After meditating on Clement of Alexandria’s saying, “prayer is keeping company with God,”²⁹ James Houston began to see prayer as a means of developing a relationship with God. Through prayer, he realized that he could have intimate conversations with the Creator of the universe and become his friend. However, he writes that “culture puts severe limitations on the way we carry out our relationships, and the same cultural limitations can operate in prayer unless we resist them.”³⁰ Because most Africans do not

²⁵Foster, *Prayer*, 5, 22.

²⁶ Philip Yancey, *Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 248.

²⁷ Larry Crabb, *The Papa Prayer: The Prayer You've Never Prayed* (Nashville, TN: Integrity Publishers, 2006), 77.

²⁸ Crabb, *The Papa Prayer*, 186.

²⁹ James Houston, *The Prayer Deepening Your Friendship With God* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2007), 9.

³⁰ Houston, *The Prayer*, 48.

have a close and intimate relationship with their father, it is hard for them to comprehend God as a loving Father who desires to communicate with them as friends. They also do not understand the need for being open and honest with God since they are hesitant to share their feelings with anyone.

Houston mentions that prayer is often used as a magical spell to coax God into releasing his power or giving the individual what he wants,³¹ a practice found in the African worldview. Many African prayer meetings appear to be battlefields where the believers are shouting, waving their arms, and stomping their feet as if they are fighting off evil spirits. Every problem in life is considered to be spiritual and must be dealt with spiritually. The Holy Spirit is not viewed as a friend but as a power for overcoming life's problems. The result is a prayer that is focused on the magnitude of the problems instead of the sovereignty and all-sufficiency of God. It is vital that Africans understand that prayer is about seeking and communicating with God, submitting to his will and being completely open and honest with him.³² There are many obstacles that believers must overcome to be able to pray as God desires, but as God's love is experienced in a fuller way, increasing trust will allow a more in-depth openness and surrender to the Lord.³³

To ensure that prayer is linked to the character of God and to keep from committing idolatry, it is essential to study and pray according to the Bible. Once again, by looking at the stories in the Bible of people who sought friendship with God through prayer, believers can be encouraged to persevere in learning this vital spiritual discipline.

³¹ Houston, *The Prayer*, 39-40.

³² Houston, *The Prayer*, 42.

³³ Houston, *The Prayer*, 75-77.

Houston gives insight into how to pray and relate to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit with the added exhortation that prayer needs to be part of the life of the community and body of Christ.³⁴

Foster's book *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*,³⁵ gives a comprehensive explanation of twenty-one forms of prayer. However, it is based on the central idea that prayer is a love relationship between God and man and praying requires being open and honest with the one loved. He focuses on three aspects of prayer: 1) Prayer that moves inward, seeking inner transformation; 2) Prayer that moves upward, seeking intimacy with God; and 3) Prayer that moves outward, seeking involvement in ministry. The first segment "Seeking the Transformation We Need,"³⁶ is an area that is avoided by most Africans. People do not want to face what is in the depths of their hearts and cannot come to the point of admitting and dealing with their true feelings, thoughts, and sins. Culturally it is inappropriate for even spouses to discuss many areas of their lives with each other. The thought of opening up to God to confess sins or to admit anger, disappointment, and pain are inconceivable. The closest relationship in this culture is probably that of a mother to her child, yet children do not belong to the woman for the "bride-price" paid before marriage was for her offspring.³⁷

³⁴ Houston, *The Prayer*, 139.

³⁵ Foster, *Prayer Finding the Heart's True Home*.

³⁶ Foster, *Prayer Finding the Heart's True Home*, 9.

³⁷ J. Brendon, *The Man & His Ways: An Introduction to the Customs and Beliefs of Rhodesia's African People* (Salisbury, Rhodesia: Ministry of Information, Immigration and Tourism, 1969), 20.

In “Seeking the Intimacy We Need,”³⁸ Foster presents the types of prayers that focus on hearing God’s voice, worshiping him and learning to rest in him in the midst of the chaos of life. Because most children in Africa grow up experiencing very little physical affection from their father, no one would think of God wanting to hold and cuddle his children. Although Africans praise God loudly in worship, silence is not a part of individual or corporate prayer. Praying in tongues is practiced widely, but it is loud and repetitive, similar to the mantras spoken in Eastern religions.

The third part, “Seeking the Ministry We Need,”³⁹ is more in line with the praying that takes place in the African church. Petitionary prayer is the mainstay of praying, in fact ensuring that God knows exactly what one wants is the focus of prayer. There is a fair amount of intercession for family members and their needs as well. Healing is an expected result of prayer, so any form of physical, mental, or emotional illness is prayed for fervently. Fasting is frequently practiced to “encourage” God to answer the prayers appropriately. Authoritative and radical prayer is also practiced in the African church as the people come against the principalities and powers of darkness. Basing much of their prayer on prophecy, they “decree and declare” many things in the “name of Jesus.” Prayer is an important part of the African’s life, but there is little to no relationship with the Triune God.

Yancey states that “the main purpose of prayer is not to make life easier, nor to gain magical powers, but to know God.”⁴⁰ Although he states that the purpose of prayer

³⁸ Foster, *Prayer Finding the Heart’s True Home*, 141.

³⁹ Foster, *Prayer Finding the Heart’s True Home*, 303.

⁴⁰ Yancey, *Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference?*, 56.

is to get to know God, he deals with many of the questions that Christians have wondering whether prayer makes any difference. He attempts to explain that prayer will give believers the right perspective on God's will for their lives. Most people wonder if prayers can change an immutable God. Yancey seems to indicate that prayer changes both God and man. However, if prayer is keeping company with God, then those who pray must also have the ability to hear God's voice. Like any relationship, it takes time to develop, and as believers persevere in prayer, their friendship with God will grow. Yancey also reminds Christians that they must remember that God's ways are mysterious when considering topics such as unanswered prayer, miracles, and healing.⁴¹

Some authors believe that prayer is designed only to change those praying, not God, so that the prayers come in line with his will. Crabb states that "relational prayer provides the Spirit with a wide opportunity to do what he loves most to do, to draw me into the heart and life of the Father and to make me more like the Son."⁴² "Prayer is not for the purpose of getting God to help us...but for getting us in line with what God is about to do. Prayer is God's invitation to enter His throne room so He can lay His agenda over our hearts."⁴³

If the purpose of prayer is to develop an intimate relationship with God then hearing God through interactive communication is essential.⁴⁴ To hear God speak

⁴¹ Yancey, *Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference?*, 248, 232.

⁴² Crabb, *The Papa Prayer*, 10.

⁴³ Henry Blackaby and Norman Blackaby, *Experiencing Prayer With Jesus* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2006), 29.

⁴⁴ Dallas Willard, *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship With God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 12, 13, 26, 31, 67.

requires that one come to him to listen, yet most see prayer as a time to talk, presenting God with requests, needs, problems, and demands.⁴⁵ The idea of hearing God speak is foreign to Africans, but hearing from the *vadzimu* is part of life. The spirits make their will known to the community by possessing certain people. These spirit mediums (*svikiro*) are honored by all and depended upon for spiritual direction and advice. Whether the people need guidance or want to make requests, they have to go through these people who have been chosen by the spirits.⁴⁶

Spirituality as a Lifestyle for Spiritual Formation

Peterson and Willard are cautious when using the word spirituality because “the term ‘spirituality’ is more apt to call to mind dabblers in transcendence than lives of rigor, exuberance, goodness, and justice – the kinds of lives historically associated with this word.”⁴⁷ However, these types of spiritualities favor the “sovereign self,” not Jesus Christ. Spirituality is not just about an intimate relationship with Jesus; it is a life lived each day following Jesus. Spirituality is not even an attempt at becoming a better person; it is about joining God and participating with what he is doing.⁴⁸ Unlike McGrath and Chan, Peterson presents spirituality to be a part of a believer’s daily life accomplishing the boring, mundane jobs at work and around the house. It is a life oriented toward God with a “prepositional participation.” Believers are called to act “with,” “in,” and “for,” remembering that life is not about us, but about the God of creation, history, and

⁴⁵ Blackaby and Blackaby, *Experiencing Prayer*, 43.

⁴⁶ Michael Gelfand, *African Crucible* (Cape Town, South Africa: Juta, 1968), 6.

⁴⁷ Peterson, *Eat This Book*, 16.

⁴⁸ Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places*, 355.

community.⁴⁹ Although Africans struggle to grasp the fact that they can have an intimate relationship with Jesus, they do not divide the secular and sacred, so spirituality is already a part of their daily life.

Dallas Willard believes that spiritual formation is the process whereby one's spirit or heart is formed and given a definite character. It happens to everyone whether wicked or saintly, religious or irreligious. However, he states that "the spiritual renovation and the 'spirituality' that comes from Jesus is nothing less than an invasion of natural human reality by a supernatural life "from above."⁵⁰ To develop a true Christian spiritual life requires that the thoughts, feelings, choices, body, social context and soul of an individual be spiritually transformed or renovated to be like Christ. Radical change can only happen by relying on God's grace and the Holy Spirit while studying the Scriptures and praying. Attempting to change one's outward behavior alone will not accomplish the desired results, for the entire person (worldview included), must be renovated, integrated and brought under the lordship of Jesus Christ. Once the individual is "fully integrated under God" one's spirit will be instructed by God which in turn will direct one's mind, then one's soul and finally the body.⁵¹

It seems that Willard is more inclined to view the believer as being in charge of spiritual formation or transformation. The Holy Spirit may assist him, but it is his decision and persistence in practicing the spiritual disciplines that will cause him to mature; "human life as a whole does not run by will alone. Far from it. Nevertheless, life

⁴⁹ Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places*, 335.

⁵⁰ Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting On the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002), 19.

⁵¹ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 31.

must be organized by the will if it is to be organized at all. It can only be pulled together ‘from the inside.’ That is the function of the will or heart: to organize our life as a whole, and, indeed, to organize it around God.”⁵² It will be necessary to help Bible college students understand that sanctification involves working with the Holy Spirit to develop an intimate relationship with God and bring about life transformation (Phil. 2:12-13).

Biblical Worldview and Spiritual Formation

Syncretism Hinders Spiritual Formation

To ensure that one’s Christian faith becomes a relationship with Jesus Christ and not just a formal religion, every area of a person’s life as well as one’s questions must be addressed. Both the African worldview and the Western worldview are anti-God in many areas, and only a Biblical worldview will produce spiritual maturity. Too often the church presents a picture that confessing certain beliefs and avoiding specific practices means that now the individual has a personal relationship with God. Africans will quickly submit to this legalistic religion because ATR adheres strictly to a religious code. It is essential that a program is not presented, but a Person. Through a narrative style, not a legal code, the Bible presents a living Christ who is still active in the lives of men.⁵³ Alan Tippett clarifies this point by saying,

The Christian way is not a legal code, or a “statement of faith,” but a journeying with Christ. Christian ethics cannot be set down in a code book; they spring from a relationship between Master and disciple...Effective mission is more “bringing men to Christ” than teaching the Christian way, for the way cannot be taught to unbelievers; it has to be experienced as men tread it with Christ.⁵⁴

⁵² Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 35.

⁵³ Philip M. Steyne, *God’s of Power A Study of The Beliefs and Practices of Animists* (Houston, TX: Torch Publications, 1989), 248.

⁵⁴ Steyne, *God’s of Power*

Everyone has a worldview, and unless appropriately trained, Scripture will be interpreted through the filter of that worldview. This is how syncretism develops, and this is the problem in the African church. Gailyn Van Rheen points out, “Christian conversion without worldview change, in reality, is syncretism.”⁵⁵ The AWV has power over the everyday lives of African Christians. Their syncretistic beliefs have influenced not only their churches but also their families, communities, and Africa itself. It is vital that lecturers and church leaders are aware of the similarities and differences in the African and Biblical worldviews so that they can assist believers to purify their faith and beliefs through a proper study of the Scriptures.

Ambrose Moyo is adamant that the Gospel aims to transform people (2 Cor. 5:17) and that should bring about a transformation of culture as well. However, he states that in the past missionaries presented Christ in a manner that made him appear to not only be above African culture, but against African culture. It was understood that to become a Christian required forsaking the African culture with all of its beliefs and practices and adopting the Western culture.

What was needed, however, was a Christ who would renew or transform African culture. While the African peoples had many ideas about life which God had revealed to them, there was also a great deal of imperfection in their cultures. The need was to allow the gospel to enter these cultures in order to adopt and adapt, renew and purify them from within and present them to God as a living sacrifice. The proclamation of the gospel ought to have allowed the people and their cultures to come alive, not to make them feel rejected.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Gailyn Van Rheen, *Communicating Christ in Animistic Contexts* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1991), 89.

⁵⁶ Ambrose Moyo, *Zimbabwe the Risk of Incarnation* (Geneva, CH: WCC Publications, 1996), 11.

Vernon Light believes that the Africans understood the preaching to mean that they were spiritually incomplete without Jesus. Therefore, many of the people accepted Christianity as being complementary to their ATR, not a rival form of spirituality. They did not feel that a dual allegiance was contradictory because they believe the God of the Bible and the God of their ancestors are one and the same. Syncretism is a threat to the church, it prospers due to Biblical illiteracy, and failure to accept and live by the truths in the Bible will result in spiritual immaturity and an impotent church.⁵⁷

Light reminds the church that worldview and culture shape a person's identity. If one's worldview is like the foundation of a building, once the building is up the foundation cannot be changed without destroying the structure. The amount of renovation that Christianity expects of a convert is quite significant and life-changing. An outward behavioral change is much easier to achieve than an inward alteration. These core values and beliefs cannot be modified through discussion, preaching or teaching. It requires a spiritual birth and transformation and then an intense process of spiritual formation through discipleship and sanctification. Those in the church who are involved in this developmental procedure must be multiculturally fluent to be able to disciple these believers so that they can adopt a Biblical worldview without losing their cultural identity. This method of discipleship is not automatic or easy, but one's failure to thoroughly embrace a Biblical worldview means to reject Christianity and Jesus himself. If spiritual growth is going to take place, it must start with the conversion and renovation of one's worldview.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Vernon Light, *Transforming the Church in Africa* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2012), 210-211.

⁵⁸ Light, *Transforming the Church in Africa*, 212-216.

Christians need to be rooted in Christ as well as culture. God created culture and expects believers to live out their Christian lives with a Biblical worldview in their specific cultural context. There are aspects of each culture that are good and others that have been affected by sin and need to be changed or rejected. The Gospel can add truth and modify practices so that they reflect Jesus Christ. The universal Church should be a reflection of the unity and the diversity of mankind by being rooted in culture and yet rising above it. Light insists that this is also part of the process of spiritual growth and maturation.⁵⁹

In the book *African Traditional Religion in Biblical Perspective*, Richard Gehman evaluates the beliefs and values of the African worldview and religion. He presents the idea that for the African Christian church to be African, it needs to reflect the African culture. However, to honestly be Christian it must reflect a Biblical worldview which requires believers to evaluate and exchange any beliefs that are contrary to Scripture. Many Africans hold on to both African values and Christianity, and these two worldviews contradict each other at specific points creating syncretism and a very inconsistent worldview. Alternatively, they follow their Christian teachings until faced with a crisis and at that time they revert to the African practices that they learned in their youth.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Light, *Transforming the Church in Africa*, 240-245.

⁶⁰ Richard J. Gehman, *African Traditional Religion in Biblical Perspective* (Wheaton, IL: Oasis Int., 1989), 28.

Contextualization Prevents Syncretism

Wilbur O'Donovan told how Africans considered Christian theology to be Western since it did not answer their questions or solve the difficulties related to the African culture. To correct this problem, African theologians attempted to join elements of ATR with Christian teachings; the result was a syncretistic church. The solution requires that the truths found in Scripture be contextualized and stated in culturally relevant ways so that it can be applied to the daily life of the people.⁶¹

Syncretism is often the result of a desire to make the Bible relevant. As the church attempts to make the message attractive to those in their community, it no longer separates itself from the culture, and it becomes accommodating to the beliefs and values of the people. According to Van Rheen, ⁶²

Syncretism occurs when Christian leaders accommodate, either consciously or unconsciously, to the prevailing plausibility structures or worldviews of their culture. Syncretism, then, is the conscious or unconscious reshaping of Christian plausibility structures, beliefs, and practices through cultural accommodation so that they reflect those of the dominant culture. Or, stated in other terms, syncretism is the blending of Christian beliefs and practices with those of the dominant culture so that Christianity loses its distinctiveness and speaks with a voice reflective of its culture.⁶²

Missiologist David Hesselgrave has written on the process of communicating the Gospel cross-culturally. He reminds believers that every culture is unique and each defines the world in a manner that the people can comprehend. It is vital that this worldview is taken seriously by anyone who desires to share Christ, and that message must be encoded or contextualized into the reality or worldview held by the people if it is

⁶¹ Wilbur O'Donovan, *Biblical Christianity in African Perspective* (Lexington, KY: Oasis Int., 1997), 5-6.

⁶² Gailyn Van Rheen, "Modern and Postmodern Syncretism in Theology and Missions," in *The Holy Spirit and Mission Dynamics*, ed. C. Douglas McConnell (Pasadena, CA: William Carey, 1997), 173

to be understood. The starting point must be a contextualized explanation of God's revelation of himself, who he is, what he has done, and what he desires from man as found in the Bible.⁶³

Contextualization, according to David Hesselgrave and Ed Rommen is, "the attempt to communicate the message of the person, works, Word, and will of God in a way that is faithful to God's revelation, especially as put forth in the teaching of Holy Scripture, and that is meaningful to respondents in their respective cultural and existential contexts."⁶⁴ Contextualization requires an ability to find the meaning of the Biblical text so that God's revelation is communicated accurately to mankind, in any and every culture. However, it must also go one step further and give logical ways of how to apply the information to daily life that is relevant to the recipient culture.⁶⁵

It is often believed that teaching systematic theology, apologetics, and hermeneutics is the answer to bringing about spiritual growth and maturity in the church. However, most Americans seem to be blind to the fact that they teach with a Western worldview. In 1982 the Seoul Declaration was drawn up by conservative evangelicals from the churches in the East and South. They wanted to highlight the problem of "theological captivity" in their parts of the world and pointed out the problems of Western theology. They explained that Western theology is "rationalistic" and

⁶³ David J. Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally An Introduction to Missionary Communication* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1991), 195-196, 203.

⁶⁴ David Hesselgrave and Edward Rommen, *Contextualization: Meanings, Methods, and Models* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing, 1989), 200.

⁶⁵ Hesselgrave and Rommen, *Contextualization*, 201-202.

“intellectual,” it is formed from Western philosophies, especially secularism that came after the Enlightenment, and most of all it focuses on Western individualism.⁶⁶

For those that have a Western worldview, it is necessary to decontextualize the Good News before sharing it with others. Systematic theology was one of the greatest contributions of the Western church, but it also produced one of the biggest problems for missionaries. Instead of looking at the big picture that is presented by God in the Scriptures, the church focuses on little pieces of truth. The entire redemptive history from creation to the return of Christ must be submitted (Genesis-Revelation). Hesselgrave believes that God has given the church the perfect outline and literary form to present the Gospel to all of humanity. The Lord not only inspired the words and truths of the Bible, but he also gave a model for discipling the nations and bringing about spiritual maturity. This method will assist in the development of a Biblical worldview.⁶⁷

Philip Steyne agrees with Hesselgrave; he insists that God’s revelation first came to people who were immersed in animism. Man wanted to be his own god and have the power to control his own destiny, and the Lord knew how to deal with this problem. When the church ignores parts of the Bible, believers will become prey to paganism. Everyone requires the entire revelation in Scripture to have the answers or the hope needed for his or her problems.⁶⁸ The church must also be careful not to encourage

⁶⁶ “The Seoul Declaration: Toward an Evangelical Theology for the Third World,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, April 1983, accessed July 30, 2017, <http://www.internationalbulletin.org/issues/1983-02/1983-02-064-the.pdf>.

⁶⁷ Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally*, 203-209.

⁶⁸ Steyne, *God’s of Power*, 201-202.

syncretism by its method of presentation. George Wright describes the situation by saying,

The Church has preached a Gospel of individual pietism and “spiritual experience,” separated almost completely from the common life and from the historical programme of God as revealed in the Bible, while emphasizing prayer and promising the immortality of the soul. It is not that these things in themselves are totally wrong in their proper setting, but here they are separated from their total biblical context. As such, they are a reversion to pagan “normalcy,” to an individualistic, self-centered, utilitarian worship...For what purpose is the Scripture read, Christian truth expounded, and the sacraments administered? There would appear to be a great uncertainty in the churches of our day about this question. The average Christian, however seems to have little sense of the difference between biblical and pagan worship.⁶⁹

Solutions to Syncretism

Theology books abound in the libraries of Bible colleges and seminaries, but there are very few that have been written from an African perspective. Although Africa is considered to be the most Christian continent in the world, the majority of believers struggle to understand how to apply their faith to their everyday lives. The cultural issues that are contradictory to the Bible remain a part of their lives. Therefore Wilbur O'Donovan wrote a survey of Christian theology from a traditional African perspective. The purpose was to express Bible truths regarding the African culture and situation. O'Donovan starts out by writing how the Bible has its own worldview and it is the only worldview that is correct. He is adamant that to understand God's truth requires believing and accepting the Bible's worldview as one's own.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ George E. Wright, *The God Who Acts: Biblical Theology as Recital* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1969), 26-29.

⁷⁰ Wilbur O'Donovan, *Biblical Christianity in African Perspective* (Lexington, KY: Oasis International Ltd., 1997) xv, 2-3.

Paul Hiebert believes that there are many different worldviews throughout the Bible and the only true worldview is the one God holds as he views his creation. Believers are unable to understand the truth that is revealed in Scripture totally, and they need to be careful not to assume that their theological frameworks are the true Biblical worldview. “To understand Scripture, we must seek to understand the worldview themes that underlie the whole. The unity of Scripture lies first in its insistence that all the Biblical events are part of one great story—in other words, a central diachronic worldview theme.”⁷¹ The Bible is God’s progressive revelation of himself to humans, and it culminates in the person of Jesus Christ. The worldview of the people of God evolved as the Lord continued to disclose more of himself. To grasp the authentic Biblical worldview requires that one begin with Jesus Christ and then look to see how he fits into all of Scripture. Then one must look at church history, denominational doctrines, and dialogue with the body of Christ throughout the world who read and understand Scripture in very different ways.⁷²

Africans found that the presentation of theology from a Western worldview did not answer their questions or solve the spiritual problems related to their culture. Western methods of thinking and problem solving were foreign to the African way. However, efforts in the past to deal with ATR and theology have created difficulties with syncretism instead of Biblical truth. To avoid syncretism, O’Donovan followed a three-step process to construct a Biblical theology that was African. First, he asked, “What

⁷¹ Paul G. Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2011), Kindle Locations 5675-5677.

⁷² Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews*, Kindle Locations 5715-5717.

does the Bible teach on this subject.” Second, “How does African culture relate to what the Bible teaches on this subject?” Third, he inquired, “How can we express the truth of the Bible on this subject in a way that is clearly related to African culture?”⁷³

Spirituality should be based on Biblical theology, but the doctrines must be stated in a culturally relevant way and applicable to life. To ensure that spiritual growth occurs the theology must be contextualized by defining the cultural problems needing resolution. First, the cultural similarities or differences with the Bible should be discovered to see if the Bible presents a solution. Then it must be determined how the people’s worldview has to change before they can adopt the solution and change their practices. Finally, the church leaders will need to decide what strategy to implement to bring about the necessary modifications in worldview and practice. All believers could experience a renewed and dynamic relationship with the Lord if they followed these steps.⁷⁴

Jack Chalk agrees that the African worldview is one of the main hindrances to spiritual growth. He feels that the reason there are so many converts in Africa is that preachers present Christianity as being more concerned about what a person believes rather than what he is required to do. Therefore, Africans assume that they can continue to practice their ATR while professing to believe in Christ resulting in syncretism. Until they have a total transformation in their worldview so that it is Biblical, they will not be able to mature as believers.⁷⁵ O’Donovan agrees with the other authors that the issue has arisen from teaching theology from a Western perspective. Chalk states that the problem

⁷³ O’Donovan, *Biblical Christianity in African Perspective*, 6.

⁷⁴ O’Donovan, *Biblical Christianity in African Perspective*, 6.

⁷⁵ Jack Chalk, *Making Disciples in Africa* (Cumbria, UK: Langham, 2013), 2-3.

comes from not presenting the entire Gospel in its Biblical context. He feels that too often Christ is preached without explaining how as the Lord of creation he rules and controls everything. Missionaries tend to present Christianity on a cosmological level and forget to reveal how the Gospel should be applied to everyday issues of life. The result is Africans continuing to believe that the ancestral spirits control their daily lives and they live accordingly.⁷⁶

Until church leaders are willing to take a position on cultural issues, the church will continue to be weak and syncretistic. The pressure to remain silent and accommodate the culture is tremendous. Unless the African worldview is evangelized and replaced by a Biblical worldview Christians will not change. Worldview is crucial because it determines the beliefs of the people and the beliefs determine their behavior.⁷⁷ David Naugle, professor of philosophy, believes that there is much more to the issue and states,

From the perspective of Christian theism [the Christian worldview], a clash of worldview also assumes a crucial role in the hidden, spiritual battle between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan, in which the very truth of things is at stake. Between these regimes, a conflict of epic proportions rages for the minds and hearts, and thus the lives and destinies, of all men and women, all the time. Since nothing could be of greater final importance than the way human beings understand God, themselves, the cosmos, and their place in it, it is not surprising that a worldview warfare is at the heart of the conflict between the powers of good and evil.⁷⁸

Chalk considers the best way to bring about a change in worldview is by first studying Genesis 1-11 where the answers to the beginning of the universe and man are found. Here one can find the meaning of life's fundamental questions. Francis Schaeffer

⁷⁶ Chalk, *Making Disciples in Africa*, 5.

⁷⁷ Chalk, *Making Disciples in Africa*, 5.

⁷⁸ David Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2002), xvii.

believes that the Biblical worldview is in the unified system of thought presented in the Bible, and writes,

I wish to point out the tremendous value Genesis 1-11 has for modern man. In some ways these chapters are the most important ones in the Bible, for they put man in his cosmic setting and show him his peculiar uniqueness. They explain man's wonder and yet his flaw. Without a proper understanding of these chapters, we have no answer to the problems of metaphysics, morals or epistemology, and furthermore, the work of Christ becomes one more upper-story 'religious' answer.⁷⁹

What the church needs to do to find her orthodoxy and orthopraxy is study the Bible and live by a Biblical worldview which must begin with a study of Genesis 1-11 according to Hans Weerstra. He writes,

Epistemology asks how do we know what we know, and how valid and true is what we know, and what is the source and limitations, if any, of the knowledge we have. Genesis 1-11 gives true, reasonable and reliable answers to these ultimate questions. Without God's revelation given in the first chapters of Genesis no true reliable knowledge of ultimate reality, including the visible and invisible existence (empirical and non-empirical reality), is possible. One cannot obtain the deep answers concerning life, its origin, meaning and purpose without this fundamental basic reality as God has given it in Genesis 1-11.⁸⁰

Chalk, Schaeffer, and Weerstra all believe that the first eleven chapters of Genesis are the starting place when attempting to develop a Biblical worldview. They acknowledge that this passage is the foundation and must come before producing an entire systematic theology from an African perspective.

Richard Gehman, focusing on conversion, not discipleship, believes that the best way to help Africans develop a Biblical worldview is by recognizing the areas of continuity and discontinuity between the two worldviews. He points out three areas of

⁷⁹ Francis Schaeffer, *Genesis in Space and Time* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1972), 9.

⁸⁰ Hans Weerstra, "Christian Worldview Development: Part II," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 14, no. 2 (April-June 1997): 56.

continuity between ATR and Christianity. The first is that the “Christian faith is a fulfilment of the African’s desires.” Second, “African culture manifests a continuity with many elements of Hebrew culture.” Third, “ATR provides valuable points of contact.” However, he gives four points of discontinuity which include, “ATR does not lead people to Jesus Christ...ATR represents degeneration from true faith, not a development that leads to true faith...ATR differs radically from the Christian Gospel in its teachings... Converts from ATR stress discontinuity, not continuity.”⁸¹ Conversion from ATR to Christianity can be a stressful adjustment. Identifying and understanding the areas of continuity and discontinuity can help make the transition more definitive.

True conversion is a radical change of beliefs and behaviors. It is an event and a process which not only disorients a person; it can disrupt their life for as one’s worldview changes there can be periods of anxiety and fear. Research shows that as a person starts to become uncomfortable, they do not always convert. It is easier to remain in the religion to which they were born, even if they outwardly join another one. This is the case in Africa, the majority of the people in sub-Saharan Africa state they are Christian, but they do not live as Christ commands.⁸² Chalk’s recommendation to resolve the problem of syncretism and the duality of African Christians is to teach the philosophy of the Biblical worldview. The current approach has been to teach the particulars of theology expecting the worldview to change. He feels that once people understand the philosophy of the Biblical worldview, they will be able to assimilate Christian doctrines.⁸³

⁸¹ Gehman, *African Traditional Religion*, 399-401.

⁸² Chalk, *Making Disciples in Africa*, 154-155.

⁸³ Chalk, *Making Disciples in Africa*, 174-175.

Chalk believes that the church in Africa should stop focusing on evangelism and develop a strategy to de-syncretize the beliefs and practices of its members. The strategy he proposes begins by teaching Genesis 1-11. Next, he feels that the philosophical elements of a Biblical worldview should be presented and then a clear presentation of the Gospel should be given. The people need to be taught what conversion means and what the expectations are if they decide to convert. Teaching should be done on how to put this new worldview into practice and how one's behavior should reflect that change.⁸⁴

Light has written a comprehensive book on the discipleship method required to transform the church in Africa. He, like O'Donovan, believes in presenting Christian doctrine in a contextually relevant way by explaining the Biblical view and then reveal how that compares with ATR. Most people are ignorant of their own worldview and how it relates to the Biblical worldview. To irradicate syncretism in the African church will require giving African Bible students the opportunity to evaluate and compare the worldviews in a safe environment where they can discuss and deal with their questions. They must discover for themselves exactly why a Biblical worldview is essential for Christian spirituality and maturity.⁸⁵

Believers need the opportunity to explore the differences between ATR and Christianity. Many church members continue to live with a dual religious consciousness because they are ignorant of the contradictory beliefs that they hold. Laurenti Magesa is convinced that for African Christian spirituality to develop to maturity requires dialogue in an environment where the participants feel safe enough to talk. The Christian faith

⁸⁴ Chalk, *Making Disciples in Africa*, 176-179.

⁸⁵ Light, *Transforming the Church in Africa*, 374-375.

must enter the African culture and become a part of it. Jesus must be at home in Africa for Africans to develop an intimate relationship with him. The process is going to require contextualizing God's Word so that it is understood and applied in the lives of Africans.⁸⁶

Alan Tippett wrote, "When the indigenous people of a community think of the Lord as their own, not a foreign Christ; when they do things as unto the Lord, meeting the cultural needs around them, worshipping in patterns they understand; when their congregations function in participation in a body which is structurally indigenous; then you have an indigenous church."⁸⁷ It is this contextualized church that will be capable of spiritual growth and maturity because the members have understood the Gospel, evaluated the problems with their worldview, and have adopted a Biblical worldview that allows them to live as Jesus would in their own culture.

Rick Brown agrees with Magesa and writes that the Bible presents a divine program that brings about conformity to one theocentric worldview and yet it also allows for cultural diversity to be maintained. He believes that a church that is contextualized will live by the worldview revealed in the Bible and still honor and maintain their cultural customs that do not contradict the Bible's teaching. It is the adoption of foreign customs that defaces the cultures Christ came to redeem and wants to be represented in his Kingdom.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Laurenti Magesa, "African Christian Spirituality," *African Theology on the Way. Current Conversations*, ed. Diane Stinton, SPCK International Study Guide 46, (Great Britain: SPCK, 2010), 68-78.

⁸⁷ Alan Tippett, *Introduction to Missiology* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1987), 136.

⁸⁸ Rick Brown, "Contextualization Without Syncretism," *International Journal of Frontier Missions*, 23:3 (Fall 2006): 127-133.

Many Americans consider the process of contextualization as something only missionaries do, yet all believers worship in contextualized churches. There are no first century Palestinian Jews in the church today, so each denomination and congregation around the world have worked to make the Gospel at home in their cultural context. The question that needs to be asked is whether believers have contextualized well and prevented syncretism from entering their own churches. It begins with the understanding that Scripture and not experience is the authoritative standard. When the Bible gives a command or a boundary, it is not to be questioned or crossed over. However, as Jesus Christ is presented as the Word of God who came to be authentically experienced in every situation and culture, the message must be fit into the worldview of the audience.⁸⁹

Conclusion

Faithful followers of Christ know that they have been commissioned to take the Gospel to people throughout the entire world and make disciples: not just converts, but disciples who are spiritually mature and know the Lord intimately. This can be a daunting task if those in ministry are not prepared to deal with various cultures and worldviews. As more believers are trained and educated in the importance of spiritual formation, there is hope that the Body of Christ will mature and reflect her Lord. However, if these spiritual directors, pastors, teachers, and mentors do not understand how worldview impacts them as well as those they are discipling they will become discouraged at a lack of progress. The universal church is becoming more ethnically diverse, and it cannot be assumed that everyone has a similar worldview. Although there is very little literature dealing with

⁸⁹ Zane Pratt, "Four Biblical Foundations for Contextualization," Accessed July 30, 2017, <https://www.9marks.org/article/four-biblical-foundations-for-contextualization/>.

spiritual formation and worldview, it is a topic that needs to be researched and presented to the church.

Spiritual disciplines are essential for growth and maturity. However, these spiritual exercises will be of little benefit until there has been a conversion of the worldview. When a worldview does not allow for contact between God and man there can be no intimate relationship and therefore no need for prayer and Bible study. If the Gospel is presented without contextualizing the message, the church will become syncretistic and impotent. There can be little to no spiritual growth or maturity as long as believers continue to live by any worldview other than a Biblical worldview.

Orthodoxy can only become orthopraxy by contextualization done well. The best way to convert a worldview is to start with a study of Genesis 1-11 and allow time for thought, questions, discussion, and much interaction. It is vital that the similarities and differences between the worldview that is held and a Biblical worldview be examined and evaluated in detail. Utilizing the entire Bible is necessary to give clarity to the application of this new worldview and to comprehend how it answers all the questions and problems faced daily. Once a believer has adopted a Biblical worldview they are at the point that they can begin to grow and mature spiritually.

With the background information provided in Chapters 1-3, the research that was conducted on the students at HTC will be presented in Chapter 4. Questioning why the behavior and lifestyle of the students did not always change to become more Christ-like while studying sound Biblical doctrine was behind the research. The hope was that the results would provide ideas and methods to use with the students at HTC to help them mature spiritually.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH PROJECT

Introduction

Purpose of the Research Project

The importance of worldview transformation for effective spiritual growth cannot be overemphasized. When renovation in the life of a believer is not seen, then an evaluation of their worldview needs to be done to find where there are conflicts with the Biblical worldview. Courses taught in Bible schools not only need to be Biblically sound they also need to address the cultural issues and questions that the students have regarding the teaching of the Bible. Many students at HTC continued to deal with major personal problems even though they were taking classes on spiritual formation, Biblical and systematic theology, and hermeneutics. They did not seem to comprehend that the information they were learning in their classes conflicted with their worldview and lifestyles. They were passing their exams due to the knowledge they had gained, but they were not applying it to their lives. One must assume that there was a clash of worldviews that needed to be addressed with the realization that most people are not aware that they hold opposing beliefs simultaneously. The author was concerned for the spiritual development of the students and embarked upon a research project to find the problem and possible solutions.

It is not easy for Westerners to comprehend Africans and the first step in this process requires studying ATR, African culture, customs, and values while attempting to enter the African worldview. Chapter 1 presents many of the beliefs, customs, and values found in ATR as well as a detailed description of the subjects and setting of the research

project. The author spent ten years living in Zimbabwe, studying the language and culture endeavoring to understand ATR and the African worldview.

Limitations of the Research Project

Due to time constraints, this study was limited to the students of the Harare Theological College in Zimbabwe. These students were mainly from the Shona tribe and were living in the city, not the rural areas. They were both genders and ranged in age from twenty to seventy years old. Their participation was voluntary which limited the number studied. Their culture was also a limiting factor because it impacted the way they answered the questions. Those from a shame-based culture usually answer the way they think they are expected to answer (i.e., as a Bible college student) and they do not always answer truthfully. English was their second language, and they had difficulty understanding the questionnaire and following the directions. The advantage was the close and trusting relationship the author had with the students so that they normally answered honestly.

Overview of the Research Project

The subjects who participated in the study were the students attending the Harare Theological College during the second term of 2017. The author's goal was to develop a project that provided both quantitative and qualitative data about the students' worldviews and their spiritual formation. The quantitative data would be gathered using self-report questionnaires. Once the results were evaluated, Focus Groups would be set up to obtain qualitative data. Questionnaires can provide a significant amount of data in a short time, and since they would be anonymous and confidential, the desire was that the students would answer them honestly. Focus Groups, on the other hand, allow for the

acquiring of qualitative data in a non-threatening environment.¹ The data analysis from the questionnaires would primarily be descriptive statistics, and the data from the Focus Groups would be analyzed by identifying major themes throughout the verbatim transcripts.

It was hoped that all the students would participate in the study by answering the questionnaires, but there were no requirements. A drawing offering financial rewards was set up for those who completed and returned the survey to encourage participation and improve the response rate. The students were told that once they completed the first survey, they could return them to the librarian who would allow them to place their name into a box. A date was set for the drawing to take place at which time five names would be pulled out from the box, and a specific amount of money would be credited to the student's account to be used at the bookstore or to pay school fees.

All the lecturers were informed at a staff meeting about the project that was being done by the researcher. Later, a cover letter was given to each of them to remind them of the purpose of the study and how to instruct their students on filling in the questionnaire. A short explanation was also put on the top of each questionnaire to prompt the students on a few of the crucial points. To ensure that confidentiality and anonymity were maintained, the students were instructed not to put their name anywhere on the survey. One questionnaire was given to every student attending class during the first week of July 2017. Since the teachers did not want to give the students time to complete the surveys in class, they were told to bring them back at the next class period or turn them into the

¹ Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, "Semlink Research Methodology Module II," 2009, accessed June 1, 2017. <https://sakai.gcts.edu/portal/site/90032/tool/0d83693d-a9be-4e48-8a28-2eb9fd4ad336?panel=Main>.

librarian. The drawing was scheduled to be held the last week of the month to give all of the students an opportunity to complete the survey and enter the competition.

Questionnaires – Quantitative Data

First Questionnaire Development on Worldview

Questionnaires that provide the desired information can be challenging to develop. This is especially true when those being studied speak other languages and have difficulty understanding English. The concepts of spiritual formation and worldview require a more comprehensive grasp of the English language and the questions asked can be easily misunderstood. Writing the questionnaire in Shona, the main language spoken by the students, was seriously considered, but the classes at HTC are taught in English.

A group of four Shona students who had graduated from the program at HTC and had worked together on the Student Representative Council for some years assisted in the development of the questionnaire. Potential topics and questions were discussed among the group members, and meetings were held to develop the questionnaire. The group often revised the wording of the questions to ensure that the respondents would comprehend the meaning. Once the final survey was printed each member filled in their answers to evaluate the entire questionnaire and the time required. Necessary changes were made until it was approved by all the members of the group. The questionnaire was then given to individual church members who were willing to give their input on the tool. Once all the appropriate changes were made, it was ready for distribution to the students at HTC. This pilot testing of the questionnaire (see Appendix A) would allow for further development in the future when other schools would be evaluated.

The beginning of the survey contained questions related to the demographics of those being studied. They were to circle their gender, race, age bracket, length of time attending church, length of time being a Christian and length of time they had been attending HTC. This information could be used to see if there was any difference in responses to the questions based on gender, age, or length of time going to church and HTC.

The first section of the survey was designed to reveal what type of worldview the students were raised with and would potentially fall back to during times of crisis. Because most people do not know what their worldview consists of and any discussion of it can cause them to become defensive and feel condemned, the questions focused on their family instead of them individually. Closed-ended questions were developed from researching the beliefs and behaviors of those involved in ATR when faced with calamity. A multiple-choice format was used allowing most all potential answers to be marked as well as adding "Other" as a response so that the students would be able to add any other answer that was pertinent to them. Despite the instructions, some of the students did not write down their answer for every statement or only marked one response for each question. Whether the respondent did not understand, did not know the answer or just chose not to respond is not known.

The second section presented the same questions and responses that were in the first section. However, the respondent was to mark each option with A, B or O indicating whether it best exemplified the AWV, the BWV, or another worldview or unknown. Many of the statements could be classified with more than one worldview, but the participants were instructed to focus specifically on the AWV. The purpose was to

determine whether the students knew the difference in the teachings and beliefs of the AWV and the BWV. There could be no worldview change and spiritual growth unless the students could first identify the differences between worldviews.

The third section utilized a Likert Scale to allow the students to express how they felt about their spiritual life. Questions focused on their relationship with Jesus and the spiritual disciplines used to develop that relationship. A Likert Scale is one of the most common methods used to assess attitudes or the degree to which the respondents agree or disagree with a statement. This part of the questionnaire was included to assess the students' attitudes towards their spiritual life and development.

Results of the Worldview Questionnaire

Seventy-eight questionnaires were returned out of a student body of one hundred. However, ten of these were not completed correctly, so they were not used for data analysis. The demographic results are displayed in Table 2. The majority of students were male, black, ages thirty-one to fifty, had been a Christian and participated in church more than thirty years, and began their education at HTC between 2016 and 2017.

As expected, the survey revealed that all sixty-eight students endorsed childhood teachings from different worldviews. Some participants stated that their family never talked to them about specific topics as they grew up, so they did not know what their parents believed. Even when it was mentioned that much learning comes from watching and participating in events, they were uncertain what to mark. This made it difficult to assess how much of each worldview was ingrained in their past. Since the ancestral cult is one of the central teachings of the AWV and hinders Christian spiritual formation, this was the area of concern.

Table 2. Demographics of the HTC Participants

N = 68	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	29	43%
Male	39	57%
Race		
Black	63	93%
Biracial	3	4%
White	2	3%
Age		
20-30	12	18%
31-40	21	31%
41-50	22	32%
51-60	10	15%
61-70	3	4%
Number of years attending church		
1-5	4	6%
6-10	10	15%
11-15	4	6%
16-20	12	17%
21-25	4	6%
26-30	7	10%
>30	27	40%
Number of years as a Christian		
1-5	5	7%
6-10	12	18%
11-15	5	7%
16-20	12	18%
21-25	6	9%
26-30	7	10%
>30	21	31%
Time education started at HTC		
Before 2010	5	7%
2010-2015	17	25%
2016-2017	46	68%

In order to examine the data in an aggregate form, a total percent endorsed variable for the AWW, and the BWV were created by totaling the number of responses within each variable and dividing them by the total number of potential answers. Next, the relationships between the demographics (Table 2) and the worldviews were evaluated. Interestingly, there were no strong bivariate relationships between the BWV and the demographic variables of gender, age, and years of education.

At that point, the relationship between the AWV and the BWV was inspected. Consistent with the first hypothesis, there was no relationship between the percent of AWV and BWV responses checked by the students ($r = .075$, $p = .541$). This may suggest that the worldviews of the respondents were not well delineated by an AWV or a BWV distinction when growing up, but each student still had characteristics from different worldviews.

It was then discovered that there was a correspondence between the number of years attending church with the number of responses for the BWV as seen in Figure 2. After accounting for church attendance, it was noted that the change in variance (r^2) was significant, (r^2 change = .225, $F(6,60)=2.9$, $p = .014$). For the students who had attended church twenty years or less (Figure 3), there was a negative relationship between the percent of responses for the AWV and the BWV ($r = -.343$, $p = .063$). Whereas in the participants who had attended church more than twenty years, there was a positive, though a non-significant relationship between the percent responses for the AWV and the BWV ($r = .194$, $p = .244$) (Figure 4 on page 100).

In fact, church attendance explained approximately twenty percent of the variability in the BWV endorsement from the forty-four percent of the students who had attended church for twenty years or less. There it is seen that a high degree of AWV endorsement tends to correspond to a low degree of BWV endorsement and vice versa. In other words, the participants who were raised with mostly African beliefs were taught fewer Biblical truths. Those who were raised to follow more of a BWV had fewer African beliefs imparted to them. Figure 4 indicates that the fifty-six percent who attended church for over twenty years had an entirely different pattern from those in

Figure 3. If they were raised to hold many of the AWW teachings, they were also taught many from the BWV. Also, if the students believed very few of the AWW teachings they were also raised to hold very few from the BWV. Could this possibly indicate the reason for the high level of syncretism in the African church?

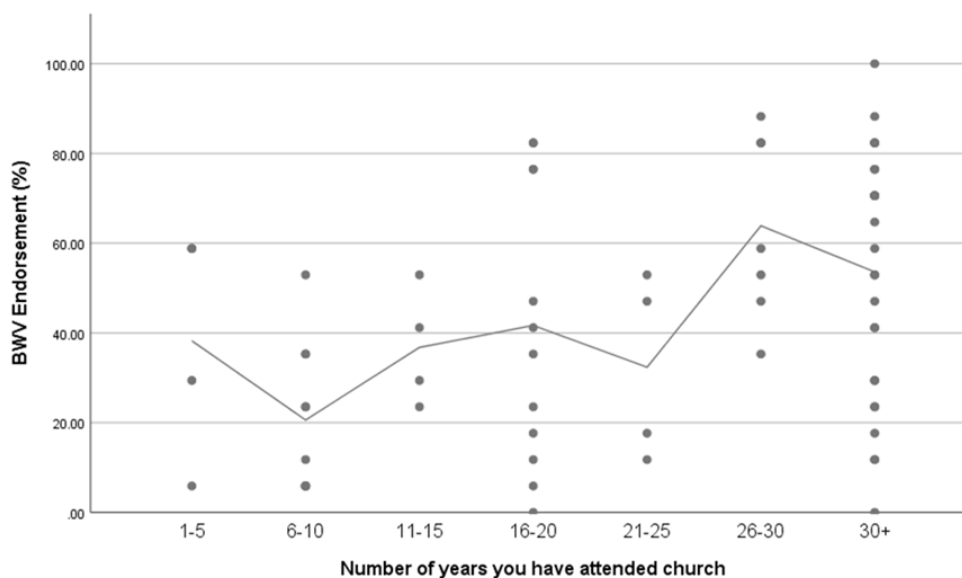


Figure 2. Relationship Between % BWV Responses and Years of Church Attendance

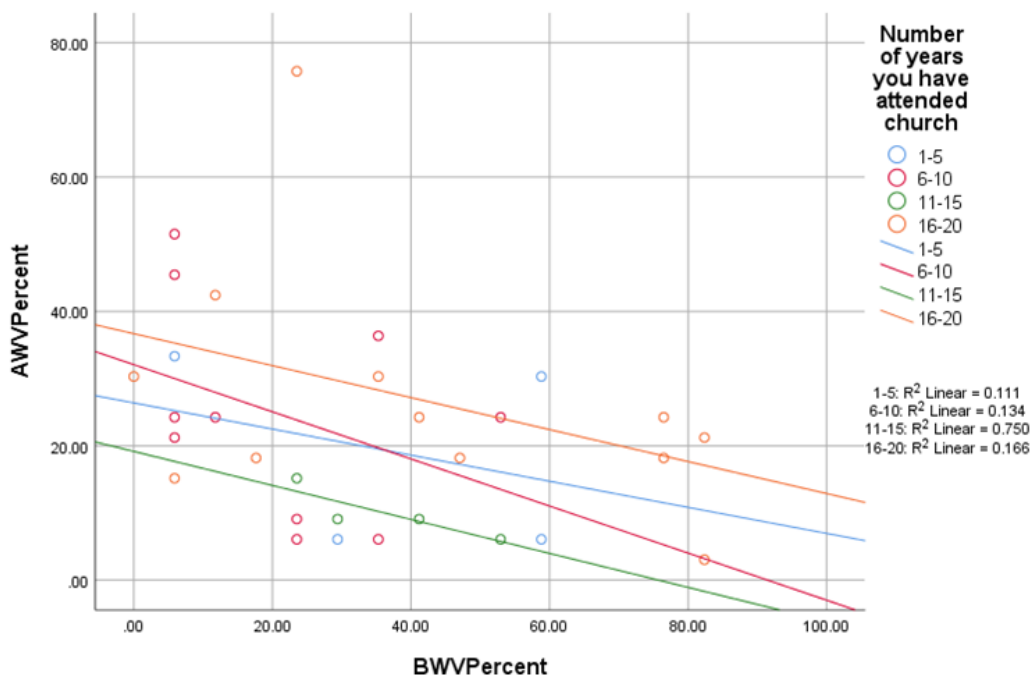


Figure 3. Relationship Between %AWV and %BWV Responses and Church Attendance

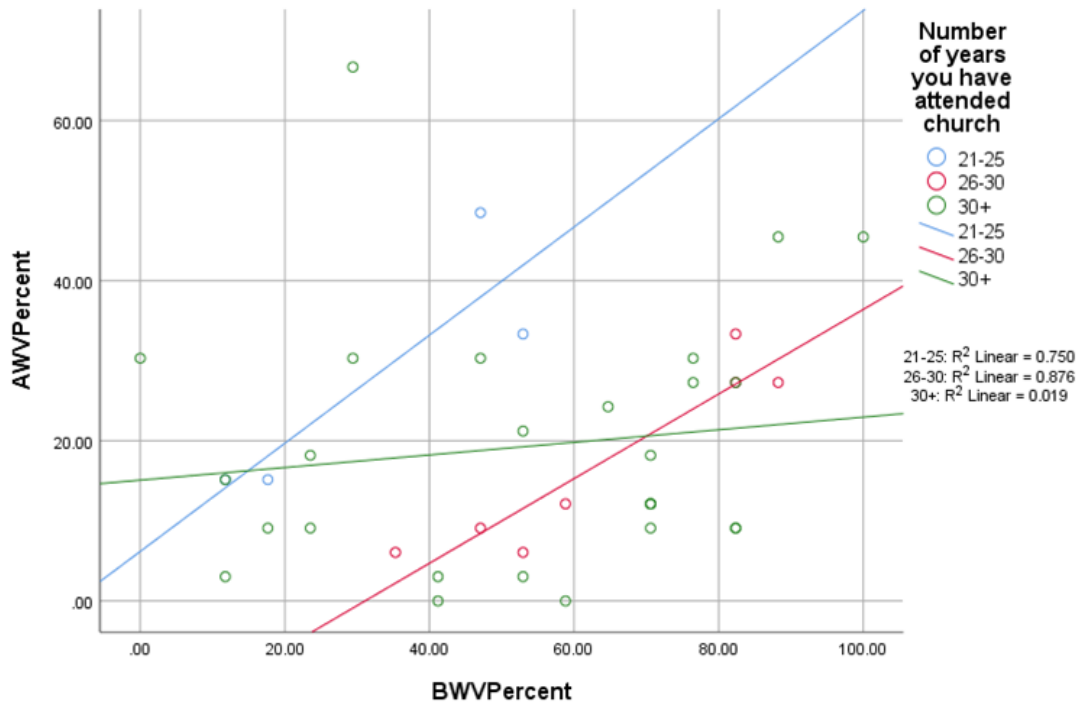


Figure 4. Relationship Between %AWV and %BWV Responses and Church Attendance

The question as to what features of the AWV were ingrained into the lives of the students while growing up were seen by the answers to the first section of the questionnaire where they indicated what they were taught. When confronted by a crisis six were taught to consult the ancestors, and twelve responded that they were instructed to go to a prophet or spirit medium. Nine marked that crises were caused by offending the ancestors, thirty-five said they were caused by evil spirits, and twenty-seven indicated crises were due to witchcraft. Eleven designated that man is at the mercy of the spirits, and it is imperative to find ways to control them. These answers reveal some of the reasons for the fear in the lives of believers.

Twenty-four students were raised to believe that they would join the ancestors when they died. Twenty-six marked that their ancestors watch over them, fifteen said that the ancestors could discipline them and thirteen indicated that the ancestors would take

their needs and problems to God for them. Eighteen were told that the ancestors could communicate with them through various means, and ten said that they were trained to perform rituals to appease them first.

Community is essential in the AWV; thirty-nine out of sixty-eight students, or fifty-seven percent, indicated that disrupting the unity and harmony in the extended family (including the ancestors) is the most significant sin they can commit, and twenty-three participants said that it could result in disasters unless appropriate payments were made. Twenty-eight designated that the primary purpose in life is to fulfill one's expected role in the family and community and marriage and procreation is an integral part of that role.

Although the students may not now believe everything they were taught growing up, these ideas can still influence their lives, and they may fall back into these practices when troubles arise. Whenever a crisis occurs, the first concern for most Africans is, "What did I do wrong?" and "Whom did I offend?" Offending even family members can result in witchcraft and curses uttered against them. Fear of evil spirits, witches, and ancestral spirits colors the thoughts and beliefs of African Christians.

The second section of the questionnaire asked the students to indicate whether the responses to each question was from the AWV, the BWV or another worldview. Looking at the sum score variables for the African and Biblical answers, it was noted that the mean percentage score for the correct answers to the BWV was eighty-eight percent (Figure 5). This indicates that the students were capable of distinguishing the aspects of a BWV. However, the mean percentage score for choosing the correct beliefs of the AWV was only sixty-two percent (Figure 6).

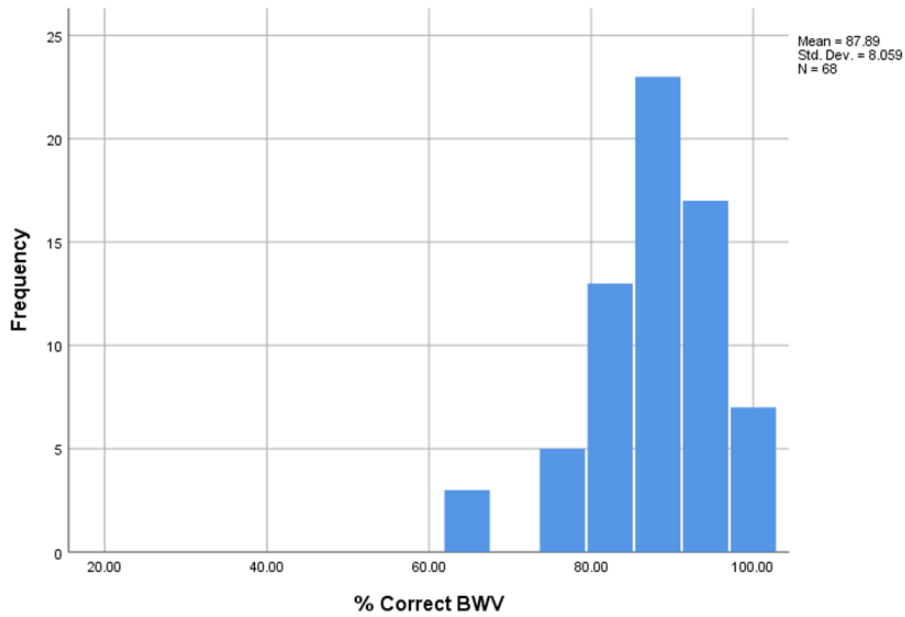


Figure 5. Frequency for Identifying Correct Responses for BWV

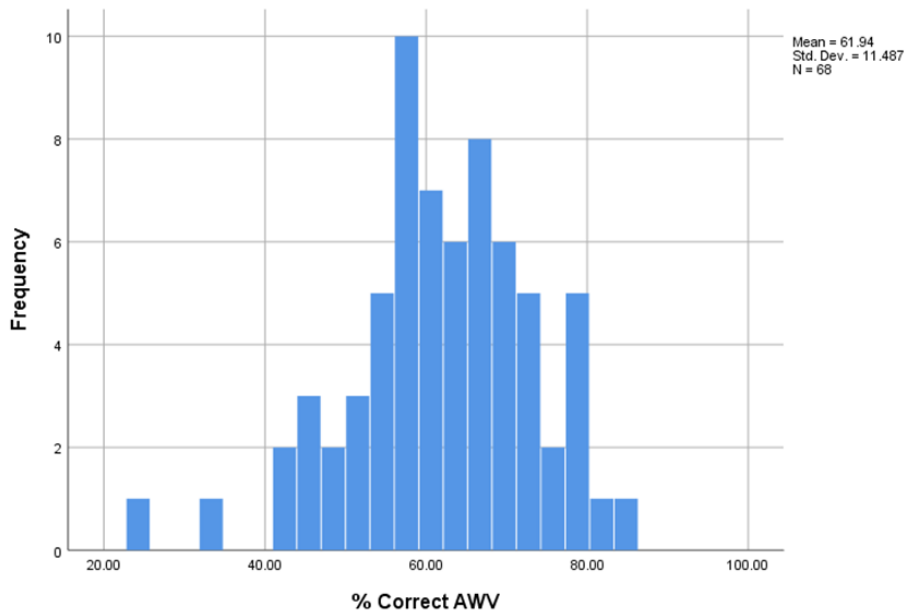


Figure 6. Frequency for Identifying Correct Responses for AWW

Design and Results of the of the Second Questionnaire

A second questionnaire (Worldview and Spiritual Formation Survey in Appendix B) was designed when it was noted that the third section on the students' spiritual life did

not provide all the desired information for the researcher. It is difficult for a person to honestly evaluate their spiritual life if they do not know what that involves. The students also tended to answer in a manner that would be more appropriate for a Bible College student to answer whether it was true or not. Therefore, a short survey was developed that asked specific questions and allowed only one answer to be circled. These questions and answers focused on some of the fundamental beliefs and behaviors of a spiritually mature Christian and are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3: Results of the Spiritual Formation Survey

***Bold answers were taught as appropriate responses in the Spiritual Formation Class.**

N=72

Questions	Freq	%
1. If you were sharing the Gospel with someone, what would you tell them is required for them to become a Christian?		
a. They must be baptized and join a church.	4	5.6%
b. They must believe Jesus is the Son of God who died for our sins and rose from the dead.	51	70.8%
c. They must pray the "sinner's prayer."	1	1.4%
d. They must repent of their sins and live a life of obedience to Jesus.	16	22.2%
2. When was the last time you shared the Gospel with a non-believer and gave them an opportunity to become a Follower of Christ?		
a. This month.	25	34.7%
b. This year.	32	44.4%
c. In the past 5 years.	10	13.9%
d. Never.	5	6.9%
3. How often do you have a QT where you study the Bible, pray, and seek God's will for your life?		
a. Daily (5-7 days per week).	37	51.4%
b. Weekly (1-3 days per week).	26	36.1%
c. Monthly (2-4 days per month).	3	4.2%
d. Rarely.	6	8.3%
4. When having my Devotional Time or Quiet Time, I study the Bible by:		
a. Randomly choosing and reading verses or passages that I like.	26	36.1%
b. Reading a devotional guide such as The Daily Bread.	8	11.1%
c. Reading and studying each individual book of the Bible in its entirety.	31	43.1%
d. Using a study guide (book, CD, DVD, internet) that teaches me.	7	9.7%
5. I read the Bible because:		
a. I need to know what it says for my exams and assignments at HTC.	1	1.4%
b. I want to come to know God.	58	80.6%
c. I want to find God's promises and claim those promises.	2	2.8%
d. That is what is expected of me as a Christian.	11	15.3%
6. My prayer time mainly involves:		
a. Asking God to fix my problems or give me what I want.	0	0%
b. Interceding for the needs and problems of my family, church and community.	48	66.7%
c. Listening to God tell me what he wants me to pray about and do that day.	16	22.2%
d. Telling God my problems, wants and needs.	8	11.1%

Table 3: Results of the Spiritual Formation Survey

7. I journal or write down important things when I have my Devotional Time so that I can reflect on what I learned from reading the Bible, remember what God has taught me, and to rejoice and thank the Lord for our time together. a. YES, I keep a written log of my Devotional Times. b. NO, I do not journal during my Devotional Times.	31 41	43.1% 56.9%
8. I continually watch for God's involvement in my everyday life whether through answered prayer or other indications that he is with me and guiding me each moment. a. YES, I intently watch for God daily. b. NO, I am not aware of God working in my life on a daily basis.	69 3	95.8% 4.2%
9. The last time I had a "God Hunt Sighting" where I could see God at work in my life was: a. Today. b. This week. c. This month. d. I'm not sure I've seen God at work in my life.	29 21 19 3	40.3% 29.2% 26.4% 4.2%
10. I have a Prayer Partner or Accountability Partner that I meet with on a regular basis to share our lives, confess our sins and pray for one another so that we can grow together in our spiritual lives. a. YES, I have a person I meet with to pray and share my life with regularly. b. NO, I do not meet with anyone to pray and share my life.	37 35	51.4% 48.6%
11. I serve the Lord's Church by: a. Going to church regularly to worship God. b. I am not involved in any church at the present time. c. Serving in a leadership position in my church. d. Teaching Sunday School or leading a Bible Study.	22 1 37 12	30.6% 1.4% 51.4% 16.7%
12. I know the Spiritual Gift that the Holy Spirit has given me and I am using it to serve the church. a. YES, I know my gift. b. NO, I do not know my gift.	57 15	79.2% 20.8%
13. I am being mentored / disciplined at the present time and I myself am mentoring someone. a. YES, I am being mentored and I am mentoring someone. b. NO, I am not being mentored and I am not mentoring anyone.	48 24	66.7% 33.3%
14. I realize that there are many Spiritual Disciplines that I could be practicing for the purpose of: a. Being noticed in the Church as a mature Christian and being put in a leadership position. b. Being transformed into the image of Christ. c. Gaining God's approval in my life. d. Getting to know God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) in an intimate way.	5 29 4 34	6.9% 40.3% 5.6% 47.2%
15. My African culture and worldview are separate from my Christian faith, therefore: a. I do not feel there is a problem for me to participate in the African cultural rituals and practices with my family and community. b. I am questioning whether I should continue to participate in the African rituals and practices. c. I am unsure as to the difference between an African worldview and a Christian worldview. d. I realize that I need to allow the Holy Spirit to transform my worldview from an African to a Christian worldview.	11 5 6 50	15.3% 6.9% 8.3% 69.4%

Most of these students had gone through a Spiritual Formation class at HTC where they were instructed in the spiritual disciplines that would help them develop an intimate relationship with the Lord. They were required to have a Quiet Time in which they were to study the Bible, pray, journal and record their meetings with a prayer partner. When questioned about their present practice of having a regular devotional time, only thirty-seven students out of seventy-two, or fifty-one percent, said they were doing it at least five times a week. In the Spiritual Formation class, students were told that the purpose of Bible study and prayer is to get to know God and to do that requires reading and studying Scripture correctly, listening to God, and journaling what was learned. Thirty-one respondents out of seventy-two, or forty-three percent, were adequately studying Scripture by working through each Biblical book in its entirety, and thirteen or forty-two percent of those students were journaling their times with God. Only sixteen people out of seventy-two or twenty-two percent said that they listened to God and prayed according to his will. Out of the thirty-seven students who indicated that they had daily devotions, only four seemed to understand how to study Scripture, journal and pray in a manner that would develop an intimate relationship with the Lord as they were taught in the Spiritual Formation class. There must be a concern for the spiritual life and maturity of the student body at HTC if only five to six percent of the seventy-two students who participated in the survey were seeking to grow through appropriate spiritual disciplines. Many believers tend to practice spiritual disciplines because “it is expected of them,” but they do not understand the purpose behind the exercise.

There is little intimacy and openness in African relationships. Because of this, there is also very little accountability which has allowed sin to be prevalent in the lives of

church members. The students that took the Spiritual Formation class struggled with the idea of having an accountability partner especially if those students were pastors. Fifty-one percent of the participants said they had a prayer partner that they met with on a regular basis. Only twenty-seven students out of seventy-two, or thirty-seven percent, had a prayer partner and were also involved in a mentoring relationship in which they were being held responsible for their actions as well as holding someone else responsible.

Students were encouraged to watch for God working in the minute details of their lives. The Spiritual Formation class required them to journal these sightings and share them with others. Ninety-four percent of the students documented that they watched for God's involvement daily; although thirty-one percent of all the students said they had not seen God at work in their lives recently or even at all. In the Focus Groups, the students discussed how an intimate relationship means "experiencing" God, not just knowing about him. Only forty-seven percent of the students understood that spiritual disciplines were designed to help them come to know and experience the Lord.

Twenty-one percent of the students stated that they did not know what their spiritual gift was even though this topic was covered in the Spiritual Formation class and one of the Systematic Theology classes. Even more concerning was the fact that ten percent of the forty-nine students who were involved in leadership positions or taught in the church indicated that they did not know what their gift was.

When looking specifically at worldview, fifteen percent of the students saw no problem in continuing their ATR practices and rituals as Christians. Fifteen percent were uncertain as to the difference between the AWV and the BWV or were questioning whether they should continue participating in the traditional practices. Many of those

who answered that they knew they should have a BWV instead of an AWW were uncertain as to how to do that.

The histogram in Figure 7 shows the number of students (frequency) who marked the appropriate responses (utilizing the correct spiritual disciplines) out of the fifteen questions. This short survey indicated that there were some shortcomings in the spiritual lives of the students at HTC. The participants studied were pastors, church leaders, and potential ministers; if they were not growing spiritually, they would not be able to disciple others into maturity. Despite their instruction in spiritual development, hermeneutics, and theology, one must question whether the problem is due to a lack of a worldview transformation. Unless they have a Biblical worldview, the information learned in Bible college will not bring change and spiritual maturity to their lives.

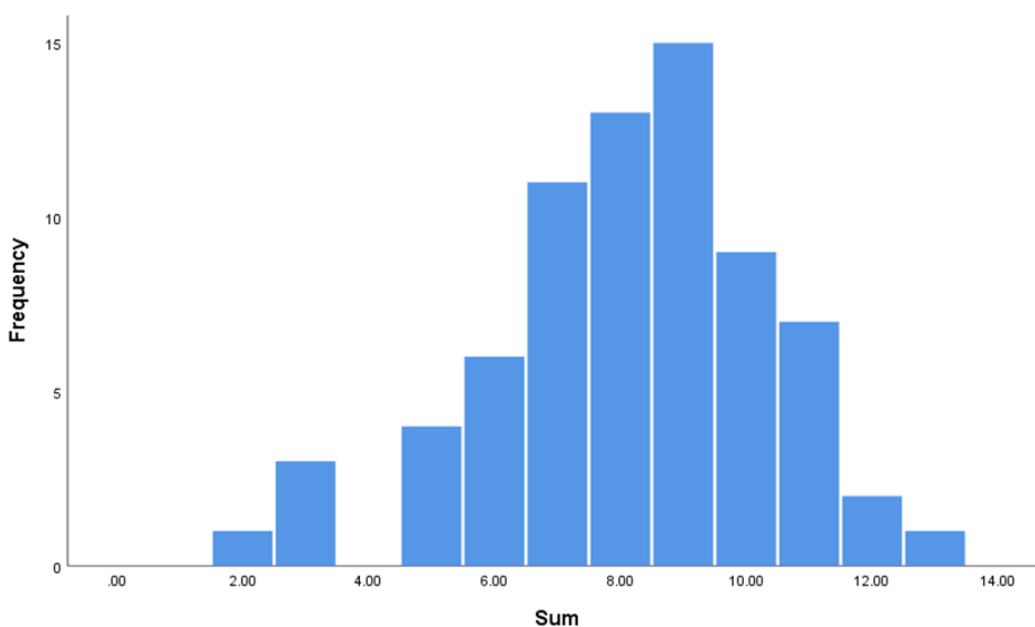


Figure 7. Number of Students Utilizing Appropriate Spiritual Disciplines

Focus Groups – Qualitative Data

Once all of the questionnaires were handed in and evaluated, the students were asked to participate in Focus Groups. Again, it was entirely voluntary, but different times were set up to provide opportunities for all those who wanted to come. The entire student body was given a list of three questions that would be the topics for discussion, and they were asked to prepare for the hour-long meetings. Six Focus Groups of eight to twelve students each were scheduled. One of the students who helped design the questionnaire agreed to be the Facilitator of the Focus Groups. Having the researcher lead the discussions could have potentially stifled the conversation by bringing a feeling of condemnation and judgment towards the AWW. It was believed that the students would feel more at ease to share their views if they could speak in Shona and have one of their peers facilitate the discussion. The researcher spent time preparing the Facilitator for the role, but also sat in the Focus Groups in case there were questions or issues brought up that needed clarification. All discussions were audio-recorded and translated if needed and then transcribed.

Three questions were chosen for discussion and were designed to elicit ideas from the students on how to encourage the spiritual formation and the development of an intimate relationship with Jesus in Africans. Many of the beliefs and teachings of ATR and the AWW contradict the teachings of the Bible and block Christian spiritual development. Only Africans can understand what will be needed to change the beliefs that reside at the core of their being and find the appropriate solutions to the problem.

Questions for Discussion

A short explanation of the purpose of the Focus Groups and what would be done during the hour-long meetings was printed with the following questions (Appendix 3).

1. Christianity is all about having an intimate relationship with God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). How do we help Africans understand this concept when the AWW teaches that God is far removed from mankind and only the ancestors can speak with him?
2. One of the most important features of this intimate relationship with God is prayer. Prayer is two-way communication between God and man, where the Lord speaks to us, and we listen, and we speak to God, and he listens. It is not just a means to get what we want, but to do what God wants. How do we help Africans understand that prayer is not a method to manipulate God, but to know God? The AWW says that man is unable to speak to God; only the spirit mediums can go to the ancestors who speak with God to present man's requests.
3. Bible study is another way that we can get to know God intimately because it reveals who he is, what he has done and what he wants. Reading the Bible is a way that God can speak to man as he seeks him and his will. How do we help Africans understand the importance of Bible study when the African culture is an oral culture, and the spoken word has more authority than the written word?

Questions for the Research Project Answered

It was in the Focus Groups that the two research questions were answered in a more profound and complete way. Although the surveys provided surface answers to what beliefs, behaviors, values, and worldviews were present in the lives of the students, their

hearts were revealed in the discussions. Questions, concerns, problems, and issues that the students had over the conflicts between the Bible and their culture came out. What was not written on the surveys was spoken in the small groups. Numerous topics were raised, but the central themes included the ancestors, God, sin, intimacy, Bible study, and prayer.

Those students participating in the six Focus Groups were all Shona, both male and female, ages ranging from late twenties to late sixties. There were three scheduled times for Focus Groups to be held at HTC on August 7, September 12, and September 14, 2017. Three separate Focus Groups met in Budiriro on August 19, 2017. The groups were informed that their discussions would be recorded so that the researcher could go back to study their responses. However, they were assured that all comments would remain confidential and that their names would not be used in the writing of the thesis.²

Theme of Discussion – Ancestors, God, Sin

As the students discussed the AWV, they realized that because they came from an oral culture in which the beliefs of ATR had not been written down, they had differing concepts of God, sin, and the ancestors. Everyone agreed that Africans believe in one God who created everything. However, some felt he cared for his creation, and others said only the ancestors were concerned. There was disagreement over the role of the ancestors in ATR and whether the people were to worship the ancestors or God. Some said it was required to sacrifice and pray to the ancestors to appease them to ensure their

² HTC Focus Groups: #1 on August 7, 2017, #2 on September 12, 2017, #3 on September 14, 2017. Budiriro Focus Groups: #1, #2, #3 on August 19, 2017. All Focus Groups had 8-12 Shona, co-ed participants ranging in age from late 20's to late 60's.

own protection. Other students believed that ATR taught that the ancestors were only mediators between man and God. Many African Christians do not see any problem with praying and bringing sacrifices to the ancestors especially when they have done something to offend them. Sin is against the community whether living or dead; it is not against God. All the students said that the ancestors were the focus of ATR and they found that when problems arose in their lives the role of the ancestors was still in the back of their minds. As one middle-aged, female student remarked, “It doesn’t matter that I’m a Christian, whenever something happens my mind immediately turns to the ancestors and spirits. Deep down I’m afraid of what they might do to me even though I know that Jesus is sovereign and victor over all.”³

Theme of Discussion - Intimate Relationships

A recurring theme in all the Focus Groups was “intimacy.” The students kept asking, “What is an intimate relationship? How do you define it?” This is not a concept that is understood by most Africans. There is no word in Shona for intimacy, and there are few intimate relationships among people that can be emulated. There were only a couple of students who could say they had experienced an “intimate” relationship at some point in time. The WWV considers the parental relationship and the marital relationship as being examples of close, loving relationships. Due to the AWW of the hierarchy of power, protocols must be followed when advice is needed; there is no idea of equal access even to one’s parents. It is difficult to explain to Africans that God desires an

³ HTC Focus Group #2, September 12, 2017.

intimate relationship with them; they rarely have a close bond with a human, unless it is a good friend or sibling.

Comments that were made by the students included, “I don’t think we have a Shona word or understanding of intimacy the way God wants us to have a relationship with him. I am a marriage officer, and I would say ninety percent of those I counsel do not understand or have any idea of intimacy.” When asked what he meant by ‘intimacy’ he replied, “I would define intimacy as having a relationship where there is closeness, openness, transparency and where everything is shared with the one you have a relationship with.”⁴ One young man responded to his comments about marriage by saying, “Our culture promotes men not to tell their wives anything because the AWW regards wives as *mutorwa* (one who is not one’s relative). Because of the understanding that your wife is not really part of you it creates a gap and hinders intimacy.” “The African culture says that women are foreigners in their own community and their children do not belong to them.”⁵ After discussing the marriage relationship and the lack of intimacy in most couples, a middle-aged female added, “As a teacher when I interact with the children and ask them to tell me about their parents they will tell me, ‘My father beats my mother.’ ‘Why?’ ‘Because he loves her.’ This is what the fathers are telling their children, and that is the type of love they know.”⁶

In the HTC Focus Group #2, the discussion turned to looking at reasons that there were very few examples of deep and personal bonds between people. One middle-aged

⁴ HTC Focus Group #3, September 14, 2017.

⁵ HTC Focus Group #3, September 14, 2017.

⁶ HTC Focus Group #3, September 14, 2017.

woman admitted, “We can’t develop intimate relationships in our families or churches because we are in serious competition with each other... we even accuse each other of witchcraft.” An elderly gentleman agreed and added, “Many go to church because they’re worried about what others think about them, not because they want to develop their relationship with God. They are always looking for ways to appear better and more spiritual than the others.”⁷

After contemplating all that had been said, a middle-aged man quietly added, “If you see people sharing personal problems then they are very close, and that is the way we are supposed to be with God, but most are not like that, most people are afraid to tell someone about their difficulties... Occasionally you will find someone with a *sahwira* (best friend). This might be the relationship that would exemplify an intimate relationship because they are the ones we can tell our innermost secrets and problems to, but few people ever have one.”⁸

Theme of Discussion - Bible Study

When one of the young men commented, “You can’t have an intimate relationship with someone you don’t know,”⁹ the discussion turned to how one could know God. Teaching the truth of who God is and how he wants to relate to people seemed to be uppermost in their minds. The idea that everyone has equal access to God and can talk to him at any time without bringing a sacrifice for sin was important. The participants also felt it was vital to tell people that God loves each person and has

⁷ HTC Focus Group #2, September 12, 2017.

⁸ Budiriro Focus Group #2, August 19, 2017.

⁹ HTC Focus Group #2, September 12, 2017.

forgiven them of their sins through Jesus, but they seemed uncertain as to how to present Christ. One of the participants remarked, “Most Africans do not have a father who is loving and compassionate, so should Jesus be introduced as “Best Friend,” “Older Brother,” “Chief Ancestor,” “Great Healer?” What type of relationship would best exhibit the type of relationship Christ desires with his people so that Africans understand that Christianity is not a religion, but an intimate relationship with God?”¹⁰

Although the students were unable to agree on how to present Christ they all approved of the statement, “For us to have an intimate relationship we need to know the Word of God inside out; then we can also help others come to know God. Without the Bible, we don’t even know how to pray.”¹¹ Comments were made on the importance of teaching those in the church, including the children, on how to read and study the Bible. “We must teach our young children how to study the Bible, so they grow up knowing the importance of God’s Word. It is difficult to change a person’s mindset once they are adults.”¹² One middle-aged man loudly proclaimed, “We need to make Bible study enjoyable and incorporate it into everyday events. Instead of avoiding family gatherings, especially those involving African traditional rituals, we should be willing to share God’s Word. The elders, chiefs, witchdoctors, and leaders of our communities must be presented with the truth. The AWV focuses on the community, not the individual, so we need to share the Gospel with the entire family or community if change is going to occur.”¹³

¹⁰ HTC Focus Group #3, September 14, 2017.

¹¹ HTC Focus Group #2, September 12, 2017.

¹² Budiriro Focus Group #2, August 19, 2017.

¹³ Budiriro Focus Group #2, August 19, 2017.

The participants were more serious as they discussed how they would have to live as an example of being a faithful follower of Christ that knows and obeys his teaching.

“One of the problems in our culture is that people can easily practice all the things which they were supposed to have left behind. Because they have not been taught God’s Word and his principles they do not see any problem with going to church and going to the ancestors.” “The Gospel is presented as just ‘praying the sinner’s prayer’ or just believing in a doctrine; new believers are not being disciplined. We are focusing on numbers of conversions; we are not explaining the importance of repentance and counting the cost.”¹⁴

Theme of Discussion - Prayer

The importance of praying correctly to develop an intimate relationship with God was also discussed. The following observations were made by the students. “To pray inside the will of God, we need to know what that is. Once again, that means we need to be studying the Bible where we find God’s will.” “But we also need to teach people how to hear and discern the voice of God from others. ATR would have us listen to the voices of the ancestors to find our answers. The preachers of the prosperity Gospel would have us ‘declaring and decreeing’ to obtain what we want. The prophets or ‘man of God’ require payment to pray for what you need or desire.” “We need to make sure Christians know that they can go straight to God and that Jesus and the Holy Spirit will help them pray appropriately.” “Yes, but we need to all agree that to pray correctly God will call you to read his Word, if you read his Word it will call you to pray, it’s a cycle.”¹⁵

¹⁴ HTC Focus Group #2, September 12, 2017.

¹⁵ Budiriro Focus Group #1, August 19, 2017.

Conclusion

There were two questionnaires given to the HTC student body of approximately one hundred students. Sixty-eight surveys on Worldview and seventy-two questionnaires on Spiritual Formation were evaluated for answers to the research questions; (1) *What aspects of the African worldview, Biblical worldview, and Western worldview were the students who attended HTC raised to believe?* (2) *Which aspects of the three differing worldviews (AWV, BWV, WWV) continued to influence the thinking and behavior of the students' daily lives?* It was hypothesized that; (1) The students' worldviews would reflect aspects of the African worldview, Biblical worldview, and Western worldview. (2) The students would have some difficulty in distinguishing the different aspects of the African and Biblical worldviews. (3) The students would not be consistently practicing the spiritual disciplines they were taught in order to develop a Biblical worldview and an intimate relationship with the Lord.

As hypothesized, the study revealed that all 68 students were raised with beliefs from the AWV, the BWV, and the WWV. However, those who had attended church for more than twenty years endorsed more of the BWV responses than the other students. Another interesting finding was that for the students that had attended church for over twenty years there was a strong positive relationship in that those who endorsed very few of the AWV responses endorsed few BWV responses. Those who endorsed many AWV responses endorsed many BWV responses. However, those individuals that were newer to the church, zero to twenty years, demonstrated a completely different pattern. Specifically, for individuals in any of the groups up to twenty years of church attendance, a high degree of AWV endorsement tended to correspond to a low degree of BWV

endorsement and vice versa. Whereas with the long-term church going groups there was a fairly strong positive relationship - those who endorsed very few AWV also endorsed very few BWV, and those who endorsed many AWV also endorsed many BWV.

The Spiritual Formation survey revealed that many of the students were not continuing with their spiritual disciplines that would help them develop an intimate relationship with the Lord. It was also noted from their responses that they did not understand the importance of utilizing those disciplines to develop an intimate relationship with the Lord.

Many of the students also participated in one of six Focus Groups. During the various Focus Groups, each student contributed to the discussion and considered the time involved rewarding. The members of each group were a little shocked at the differing beliefs that they held about ATR and the AWV dealing with the ancestors, God, and sin. They realized that the range in ages represented in the Focus Groups contributed to some of the differences in their worldviews. The younger generation leaned more towards a WWV whereas the older generation towards an AWV. However, they realized that many of the problems with spiritual formation in Africa have to do with the issue of intimacy and its impact on Bible study and prayer. It was in these discussions that the heart of the problem and the answers to the research questions were found.

Although the author hoped that the students would come up with solutions, it was more of a time of revelation for each of them. By evaluating their spiritual lives and those of their church communities, they were able to distinguish reasons for various problems causing immaturity in the African church. Many of the pastors seemed excited to start addressing these issues in their churches. As Bible college students, they all realized that

the AWV had influenced their Christian spirituality and that they needed to reevaluate their worldviews. In the next chapter, the outcomes of the research will be discussed, and recommendations will be made.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH OUTCOMES

Summary of the Project

The Church has been given the mandate to go into all the world and make disciples by teaching them to obey all that Christ has commanded (Matt 28:18-20). The apostle Paul wrote, “So we tell others about Christ, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all the wisdom God has given us. *We want to present them to God, perfect in their relationship to Christ.* That’s why I work and struggle so hard, depending on Christ’s mighty power that works within me” (Col 1:28–29 NLT). The author focused on these verses working as Dean of Students and Lecturer at the Harare Theological College. Ensuring that the students passed their exams and earned a degree was not as important as assisting them in developing an intimate relationship with the Lord and living a life worthy of Christ (Col 1:9-10). It was this concern that resulted in this research project.

Even the top students were struggling with fears of death, curses, witchcraft, and offending family members (living and dead). The author learned about these problems as students confided in her as their Dean of Students and sought her advice. Seminary training had not prepared this investigator for dealing with the scope of problems that surfaced, nor provided the wisdom to know how to assist in their spiritual development. If sound Biblical teaching was not enough to bring about spiritual maturity, then there had to be a deeper issue. The author began to wonder if the problem related to worldview.

According to Kwast, worldview is at the core of every culture, and significant life change cannot occur until the worldview has been renovated.¹ Eckman believes that Christianity is not only a personal relationship with Jesus Christ but also a worldview that defines the method of thinking about everything.² An in-depth study of the African worldview, the African Traditional Religion, and the worldviews and spiritual lives of the students would be required to provide proper counsel and spiritual guidance. The African worldview will not spontaneously change at the point of conversion. Africans continue to live by their worldview, even relying on the ancestors, until they learn how to trust Jesus and the Bible to give them answers to life's problems.³ However, Biblical knowledge is not enough; a worldview transformation would still be required before Christian spiritual growth and maturity could take place in the lives of these students.⁴

Two research questions were considered. (1) *What aspects of the African worldview, Biblical worldview, and Western worldview were the students who attended HTC raised to believe?* (2) *Which aspects of the three differing worldviews (AWV, BWV, WWV) continued to influence the thinking and behavior of the students' daily lives?* The researcher then put forth three hypotheses. (1) The students' worldviews would reflect aspects of the African worldview, Biblical worldview, and Western worldview. (2) The

¹ Lloyd E. Kwast, "Understanding Culture," in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement a Reader*, ed. by Ralph Winter and Steven Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1981), 363-364.

² James P. Eckman, *The Truth About Worldviews* (Wheaton, IL: Evangelical Training Association, 2006), 113.

³ Elizabeth Ezenweke, "The Cult of the Ancestors: A Focal Point for Prayers in African Traditional Communities," accessed March 25, 2016, <http://www.ajol.info/index.php/jrhr/article/view/87321>.

⁴ Paul G. Hiebert, "Conversion and Worldview Transformation," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 14, no. 2 (April-June 1997): 84.

students would have some difficulty in distinguishing the different aspects of the African and Biblical worldviews. (3) The students would not be consistently practicing the spiritual disciplines they were taught in order to develop a Biblical worldview and an intimate relationship with the Lord.

Two separate surveys were developed to evaluate the students' worldviews and their spiritual formation. Approximately one hundred surveys were distributed to all of the students; sixty-eight of the first survey and seventy-two of the second survey were correctly completed and evaluated. After the data was gathered and assessed, six Focus Groups were set up with eight to twelve volunteers in each group to discuss specific issues that appeared to be hindering the spiritual formation of the students. The first and third hypotheses were supported by the research, but the second hypothesis was only partially reinforced.

Conclusions to the Research

Research Question 1

The first question that the author researched was: *What aspects of the African worldview, Biblical worldview, and Western worldview were the students who attended HTC raised to believe?* Worldview is at the heart of every culture, and it defines how one understands all of life's experiences. It provides the fundamental beliefs of the universe, God, life, and the purpose of it all. These beliefs and values become the basis for people's behavior.⁵ To understand the students at HTC would require comprehending their worldviews. To assist them in their Christian spiritual development would necessitate

⁵ Kwast, "Understanding Culture," 361-361.

their worldviews being transformed into a Biblical worldview; only then would they be able to live a life worthy of Christ.

The continent of Africa has had a very similar worldview and traditional religion for centuries. Despite the introduction of Christianity and Islam, ATR and the AWV remain strong. Although cultures and worldviews are ever-changing, there is a core of beliefs that continue to influence Africans with the ancestor cult being the primary focus of ATR and the AWV.⁶ Christian missionaries started coming to Zimbabwe in the early 1800's and introduced the Gospel and a Biblical worldview. The Western worldview was brought into this small African country when it was a British colony from 1888 to 1980. Due to the advances in communication and travel, Zimbabwe has been influenced by many worldviews, but the AWV, BWV, and WWV are the most prevalent.

People are not cognizant of their worldview nor do they realize how it guides them in their responses to daily events whether mundane or critical. More importantly, one's worldview has a tremendous impact on one's spiritual development and relationship with God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. There are features of every worldview that directly oppose God's Biblical worldview, creating a barrier to man's intimacy with his Creator. Living with contradictory worldviews causes syncretism in the church and immaturity in one's spiritual life. Only by finding the offending beliefs and values that are incorporated into one's worldview will transformation be possible. Therefore, the researcher wanted to find what aspects of each worldview the students were raised to believe. The first survey on worldview dealt with this question, with the main limitation being the language barrier. Either the students did not understand the

⁶ Elizabeth Ezenweke, "The Cult of the Ancestors."

directions, or they chose to ignore them, but some of the participants only marked one response per question instead of all of those that were applicable.

First Hypothesis

The first hypothesis, “The students’ worldviews would reflect aspects of the African worldview, Biblical worldview, and Western worldview,” was supported by the first section of the survey. All sixty-eight participants indicated that the teachings they were raised to believe and follow were a combination of facets from the AWW, the BWV and the WWV. It has to be assumed that many of those beliefs are still a part of their worldviews today.

Since most people do not know what their worldview consists of, the best method to research it is to find out what they would usually do in times of crises. It is during periods of uncertainty that the deep values and beliefs are seen through the reactions and behavior. To delve into the center of the students’ lives, they were asked to choose actions their families taught them to utilize in critical times.

When the students were asked what they were taught to do in a crisis such as a severe illness, accident, death, or disaster the responses showed a mixture of characteristics from all three worldviews. Some participants marked they were raised to go to the ancestors, spirit mediums, diviners, prophets, and traditional healers (AWV), as well as a medical doctor (WWV), and pray to God (BWV). Others included a doctor (WWV), a pastor (BWV), and a spirit medium, diviner, or prophet (AWV). All the students marked a behavior from at least two of the three worldviews, most from all three. These are the typical responses found among African Christians and one of the

leading causes of syncretism in the church. Although the beliefs and actions are contradictory in many instances, the people remain unaware of the conflict.

The BWV teaches that God is sovereign over all creation, and believers are to come to him first with anything and everything. The AWV focuses on the spiritual realm as the cause and the remedy to problems. Man is unable to communicate with God so prayers and sacrifices are made to the ancestral spirits who can act as mediators. The WWV looks at everything from a scientific basis only and seeks for the physical cause and cure.

When asked what they were taught about the cause of these crises, there were again combinations of worldview beliefs. However, fifty-one percent of the students marked they learned that disasters were caused by evil spirits, and forty percent by witchcraft. Some combined the BWV that God caused the calamity, with the ancestors (AWV), or natural causes (WWV). Much of the fear in the lives of African Christians is due to the uncertainty of the sovereignty of God in life and death. The AWV teaches that people's lives are at the mercy of spirits, both evil and good and it is vital to find ways to control or manipulate them.

Although the majority of the respondents indicated that they were taught to forgive (BWV) those who had injured or offended them, there were those that also chose to demand reparation, get revenge or have them cursed (AWV) and seek legal recourse (WWV). One of the problems that was presented in counseling at HTC was the fear of being cursed or being accused of witchcraft when misfortune arose.

Only eleven out of sixty-eight participants indicated that they were raised to believe that man was born with a sinful nature. In the AWV there is no need for a savior

because there are no eternal consequences for evil behavior, nor is there a heaven or hell; at death, one joins the ancestors. Forty-five students were raised to believe that God created mankind. However, only thirty-three were told that God was intimately involved in his creation, and twenty-six out of sixty-eight were taught that he desired to have a relationship with mankind. It is difficult for Africans to develop an intimate relationship with God through prayer and Bible study due to their worldview of a distant and unknowable God.

Over fifty-seven percent of the participants were raised to believe that the highest moral value is unity and harmony in the family, and sin is creating disunity. The purpose in life is to fulfill all obligations and remain faithful to one's extended family. Crises and ancestral discipline can result from causing disharmony in the family. This is one of the leading reasons for syncretism; if a choice has to be made whether to obey God or one's family, the family will come first. Respect, honor, and obedience to one's elders is the highest moral obligation.

Research Question 2

The second question to be researched was: *Which aspects of the three differing worldviews (AWV, BWV, WWV) continued to influence the thinking and behavior of the students' daily lives?* It is difficult to define the various facets of each worldview that is influencing the students' behavior during a normal day. However, there were some indications of the features that were uppermost in the students' minds.

On the Spiritual Formation Survey, over fifteen percent of the participants saw no problem in continuing their ATR practices and rituals, which involves contacting the ancestors, even though they claimed to be Christians. Fifteen percent of the respondents

were uncertain of the differences between the AWV and BWV and were questioning whether they should continue these practices. Sixty-nine percent knew that they needed to live by a BWV, but there was no indication that they were doing that.

The comments made in the Focus Groups revealed the profound concerns in the heart of these students as most of them agreed that the role of the ancestors was always in the back of their minds. They realized that they struggled to grow spiritually because they did not have a conception of intimacy and developing a deep and close relationship with people or God. They admitted that respecting and obeying their elders was a critical value, but it did not come from a loving, trusting, transparent bond. Many fulfilled their responsibilities out of fear and the desire to be honored by the rest of the community.

Members from each Focus Group admitted that they often utilized spiritual disciplines because it was expected of them, not to get to know God. Most of the participants felt that the reason so many people in the church continued to practice the traditional rituals was that they did not know what God said in the Bible and did not know his will. However, they also acknowledged that even if God's will was known, the expectations of the extended family and community would take precedence. Because one's belief determines behavior, it can be assumed that many of the values from the AWV continued to influence the students at HTC as they struggled to live a Christ-like life.

Second Hypothesis

The author's second hypothesis, "The students would have some difficulty in distinguishing the different aspects of each of the African and Biblical worldviews" was only partially supported by the results of the survey. The mean percentage score for the

correct answers to the BWV was eighty-eight percent and sixty-two percent for the AWV. It appears that the students had a reasonably good idea as to the teachings of the Bible, but not their own African worldview. Since the practice of ATR has only been passed by word of mouth, there are numerous variations to beliefs, practices, and rituals as was discovered by the students in the discussion groups. The author assumed that the students would be able to choose most of the correct answers to the BWV since they were at Bible school. However, the investigator believed that the students would consider some of the WWV beliefs taught by missionaries and white Africans to be from the Bible which was true for some questions. Twenty-three out of sixty-eight students said going to the doctor or hospital was a Biblical teaching. Twenty-three participants believed that the BWV teaches crises are due to natural causes, and forty-four marked it was Satan and evil spirits that bring about the disaster. Seventeen respondents believed the ancestors were just a superstition according to the BWV, whereas fifty said the Bible informs readers that they are demons. Forty-one students believed the BWV teaches that man will live only as a spirit after death.

Richard Gehman writes, “a careful look at the African landscape reveals the deep-seated traditional worldview is held simultaneously by those who embrace either Christian or western thought.”⁷ Without realizing it, many Christians continue to operate with two contradictory worldviews which seem to be closed to the influence of each other. John Mbiti states that at conversion, changes “are generally on the surface...Traditional concepts still form the essential background of many African

⁷ Richard Gehman, *African Traditional Religion in Biblical Perspective* (Wheaton, IL: Oasis International Ltd., 2011), 6.

peoples.⁸ This mixing of beliefs and practices has resulted in a syncretistic and immature church. The majority of the time, the traditional rituals are followed due to the cultural belief that respect for the elders (including the dead) is most important as well as maintaining unity and harmony among the community and family members. It is better to practice the traditional religion and maintain peace than it is to follow the teachings of Jesus.

Every earthly worldview has aspects that contradict God's Biblical worldview and some that are compatible. There are specific facets of the AWV that are much closer to the BWV than the WWV. The AWV is holistic; there is no division between sacred and secular as in the WWV. The AWV is cognizant of the fact that there is a spiritual realm and that there are spiritual beings who exist and even interact with mortal creatures. Human relationships and maintaining unity and harmony in the community is vital to Africans, unlike the individualism that is championed in the WWV. No one should be prideful, assuming that his or her worldview is more Biblical than another. All those who desire to follow Christ must take the time to evaluate and compare their beliefs to the teachings of the Bible.

Understanding many of the significant worldviews is essential for transformation to take place. Unless a believer can discern the differences in worldviews, they are at risk of being deceived. Paul warns Christians in Colossians 2:8 (NIV) "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ." The

⁸ John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Garden City, NJ: Anchor Books, 1969), xi.

Church can easily find itself opposing the Lord if it is not willing to uphold and live by the Biblical worldview.

Third Hypothesis

The third hypothesis put forward by the author, “The students would not be consistently practicing the spiritual disciplines they were taught in order to develop a Biblical worldview and an intimate relationship with the Lord,” was supported by the research. On the survey, forty-seven percent of the participants stated that they realized that practicing spiritual disciplines could help them get to know God more intimately. However, only fifty-one percent had devotions at least five times a week, and even fewer were journaling. Seventy-eight percent were praying in a manner that focused on themselves instead of listening and communicating with God. Only twenty-two percent of the students realized that the Gospel teaches repentance and obedience to Christ. Looking at the total number of students who claimed to be practicing the appropriate spiritual disciplines there was one who had thirteen out of the fifteen correct responses; two participants marked twelve, and six students checked eleven out of fifteen spiritual disciplines.

ATR is a religion that requires the people to make sacrifices and perform rituals, all aimed at protecting them from evil spirits, curses, and witchcraft. It appears that many churches have exchanged traditional rituals with spiritual disciplines, such as fasting, all night prayer vigils, and legalistic lifestyles, hoping to gain God’s blessings. In the Focus Groups, participants admitted that most of the time they found themselves doing the spiritual disciplines out of a sense of duty, but they did not expect God to speak to them or interact with them. It must be assumed that the teachings of the AWV are hindering

the students from experiencing a relationship with God. Unless their worldview allows God to be intimately involved in the lives of his people, they will not be able to grow spiritually.

Recommendations for the Future

Revision Required to Fulfill the Great Commission

With the world being a global community, it is vital that all Bible colleges and seminaries produce church leaders who are capable of ministering in a multicultural environment.⁹ Even African leaders must be able to understand the difference in worldviews and cultures and assist their congregations to develop a Biblical worldview if the church is going to mature spiritually. Unless pastors preach and teach the Biblical worldview in their churches, insisting that everyone lives accordingly, the members will accept Christianity without rejecting their old practices. “Where the African Christian’s beliefs differ from the Biblical worldview there is a failure in praxis and the Christian religion is rendered ineffectual in the lives of those who claim to be Christian.”¹⁰ To ensure that students are prepared for this task, each Bible school lecturer must first evaluate their own worldview and then the curriculum to ensure that the Biblical worldview is being presented and that the classes are addressing all of the students’ questions and concerns regarding the conflicts with their own worldview.

The author realized that the research would possibly show that the teaching methods and the curriculum at HTC would need to be revised in an attempt to provide a

⁹ Vernon Light. *Transforming the Church in Africa* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2012), 218-219.

¹⁰ Jack Chalk, *Making Disciples in Africa* (Cumbria, UK: Langham, 2013), 3.

Biblical education that would meet the needs of African believers. The curriculum must deal with the problems and issues that Africans are confronted with on a daily basis and cover all the topics that clash with the Bible and the Biblical worldview. Input from the students would be vital to grasp the conflicts that were being experienced during their educational program at HTC. It would be beneficial to have the students come up with ways to teach Spiritual Formation so that Africans could understand and apply what they learn.

The task seems formidable, but the Great Commission will not be fulfilled until there are obedient Christ Followers around the world; believers who have developed a Biblical worldview and an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. These are the disciples that the Lord desires the African Bible colleges to educate and train to lead and pastor his Church. This will require more research, practice, teaching, but most of all seeking the Lord's wisdom and guidance.

Revision Required for Further Research

Research and evaluation of the educational programs in Africa are necessary for growth to occur. The pilot testing of the "Questionnaire on Worldview" revealed some problems with this research tool. In the first section that was designed to evaluate the type of worldview the students were raised with, there was uncertainty in how to answer. In the African culture, children are expected to learn by watching and following the example set by the adults, but they are not always given an explanation for the behavior or the belief behind it. It can also be threatening to a Bible school student to reveal the reality of their background in ATR. In the second section where the participants were to indicate which response was from the AWV, the BWV, or another worldview, there seemed to be

confusion as well. Most people are not knowledgeable about worldviews or the differences between them. However, one of the problems with these questions is that some responses were true for more than one worldview making it difficult just to put one answer. The Likert Scale, in the third section, was frequently answered in the extremes of Strongly Agree or Strongly Disagree which did not provide adequate information. The second questionnaire, the Spiritual Formation Survey, however, was received well and answered without questions or confusion.

Therefore, the investigator revised the survey utilizing the format that seemed to work best. This new survey used the same questions that were found in section one and two, but this time the respondents were to only mark the beliefs and practices from the AWV in the first section and those from the BWV in the second section. By focusing on one worldview at a time, it was hoped that there would be less confusion. The Likert Scale was replaced with the questions from the Spiritual Formation Survey to evaluate the spiritual life of the respondent. Appendix D contains the revised survey that will be pilot tested with the next school that is evaluated.

Revised Strategy to De-syncretize the Church

Besides lecturing at HTC, the researcher also taught adult Sunday School classes at Northside Community Church. There were approximately twenty-five to thirty co-ed, multiethnic members ranging in age from twenty-five to eighty-five. After presenting much of the same material to this class as was taught at HTC, the author became discouraged at the lack of spiritual growth and change in the overall group. In the hope of assisting the members to develop a Biblical worldview, Genesis 1-12 became the focus of the class in 2014. Genesis 15:1-6; 17:1-7; 21:1-5; 22:1-19; Exodus 12:1-28; 20:1-21;

Leviticus 4:1-35; and Isaiah 53 were discussed after Genesis 1-12 in preparation for classes on the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7).

John Milton said, “The true function of the teacher is to create the most favorable conditions for self-learning... True teaching is not that which gives knowledge, but that which stimulates pupils to gain it. One might say that he teaches best who teaches least.”¹¹ Realizing that change would only occur in the lives of these believers if they discovered the truth for themselves, the structure of the class changed. The class was divided into three small groups of eight to ten adults. Approximately fifteen minutes were utilized by the teacher to give background information pertinent to the passage and then instructions. Each week a consecutive passage from Genesis 1-12 was studied by the entire group. They were specifically looking for what the passage taught about God, what it taught about man, and what God expected them to change (beliefs, attitudes, behaviors) to live according to his will. After an hour all three groups reconvened and shared what they learned and what they planned on doing differently that week to live in obedience to God. It is vital to remember that, “The ultimate objective in teaching the Bible is not Bible knowledge, though that is very important; it is applied Bible knowledge in the student’s everyday life.”¹² Discovering Biblical teaching on all the doctrinal areas was important, but applying it was essential for spiritual growth. The next Sunday each member was required to share how they did in the application of what they learned. It was amazing to see the growth that started to occur in the participants of this class.

¹¹ Howard Hendricks, *Teaching to Change Lives* (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1987), 38.

¹² Lawrence Richards and Gary Bredfeldt, *Creative Bible Teaching* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1998), 94

However, the real-life transformations occurred after gaining the baseline knowledge from the Old Testament and then studying the Sermon on the Mount. The same small group discussion format was followed, but an entire year was used to go through Matthew 5-7. The focus at first was on the Beatitudes, and each one took three to four weeks to cover. The first week the facilitator would give background information and cross-references and ask pertinent questions to challenge the class in coming up with an explanation of what Jesus meant in that Beatitude. After one hour of small group interaction, they would share and come to a consensus as to what Jesus meant. The second week the teacher would remind them of what they said Jesus meant by the Beatitude studied the previous week and then ask them if they as individuals, families, communities, tribes, and clans valued and lived by that Beatitude, giving specific examples. After an hour, each group would sheepishly admit that they were not valuing nor living by the Beatitude being studied. The third week they were reminded that all of them previously confessed that they were “Followers of Christ” so they were to come up with specific ways to live by that Beatitude that week. This was the most challenging task of all and often took two weeks to deal with adequately. The group was now beginning to open up to areas of weakness and sin in their lives, and asking for help on how to change. The Holy Spirit started to convict them of wrong beliefs and sinful behavior and instead of denying the problems they confessed and asked for prayer. The group became more united and excited to study the Bible and pray together. While studying these chapters in Matthew, the Gospel message was clearly presented, as well as Christ’s expectations for them to have transformed lives starting with their worldview. Some of those who had attended church for over twenty years, including church leaders, realized they were not

Christians and gave their lives to Christ. They started to disciple others and encouraged the young believers to develop an intimate relationship with Jesus. The teacher knew that true learning had occurred because life change was finally seen.¹³

Spiritual growth and maturity will not occur in a syncretistic church. Different methods must be sought to bring about a worldview transformation in congregations as well as in trained church leaders. Sunday school, youth groups, Bible studies and other group activities could be the training grounds for everyone in the church. Genesis 1-11 could be presented to all age groups to begin developing that firm foundation that is needed for spiritual formation.

Revised Strategy for Bible Colleges

The results seen in the class at Northside Community Church were remarkable; however, teaching in a college does not allow unlimited time for discussion, questions or study. The concern remains as to how students attending Bible college can develop a Biblical worldview so that they can grow spiritually and develop an intimate relationship with Jesus. This new strategy would first require all of the faculty and staff to learn about worldviews so that they could evaluate and compare their own worldviews to the Biblical worldview. The next step would be for all of the curricula to be evaluated for the worldview that it is portraying and is being taught to the students. Changes would need to be made so that each subject would cover the Bible's teachings on every important issue in that culture. It would be beneficial to have a specific class dealing with worldviews at the beginning of the students' educational program to prepare them for the renovation process that would need to take place. "Rarely does theology from a Western worldview

¹³ Hendricks, *Teaching to Change Lives*, 137.

deal with anything beyond conversion. The African who has lived in fear of evil spirits, witches, and curses needs to have a theology that shows Jesus as the victor who has triumphed over Satan and all evil powers (Col 2:15) and who can free him from bondage as well.”¹⁴

After discussing the problem with HTC students, the researcher developed a tool to assist in the process. The Tool for Worldview Evaluation (see Appendix E) would be given to a student when they first started Bible college, and they would be instructed to work on it and fill it out as soon as possible. The purpose would be for them to realize how their own beliefs compare to their culture and the teaching of the Bible. The first step in change is to acknowledge the problem. They would be encouraged to talk to their Advisor or Lecturer if they had concerns and use this tool to start class discussions dealing with cultural differences. A copy would be put in their student file at the end of the first year. It could be the basis for regular student evaluations, and at the end of their program, they could be evaluated to see if their worldview had changed appropriately. The investigator plans on pilot testing this tool in 2018.

Revised Focus for Spiritual Formation

Bible school students around the world are the present and future pastors and leaders of the church. To ensure that Christ’s Church is spiritually mature requires that these students be given sound Biblical teaching that is contextualized for their culture and worldview. It will be vital that they understand and can evaluate their worldview and

¹⁴ Gailyn Van Rhee, *Communicating Christ in Animistic Contexts* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1991), 141-142.

compare it with a Biblical worldview for spiritual growth and transformation to take place.

Paul Hiebert, one of the world's leading missiologist anthropologists, considered the transformation of one's worldview paramount to fulfilling the Great Commission. He wrote,

Conversion to Christ must encompass all three levels: behavior, beliefs, and the worldview that underlies these. Christians should live differently because they are Christians. However, if their behavior is based primarily on traditional rather than Christian beliefs, it becomes pagan ritual. Conversion must involve a transformation of beliefs, but if it is a change only of beliefs and not of behavior, it is false faith (James 2). Conversion may include a change in beliefs and behavior, but if the worldview is not transformed, in the long run the gospel is subverted and the result is a syncretistic Christo-paganism, which has the form of Christianity but not its essence. Christianity becomes a new magic and a new, subtler form of idolatry. If behavioral change was the focus of the mission movement in the nineteenth century, and changed beliefs its focus in the twentieth century, then transforming worldviews must be its central task in the twenty-first century.¹⁵

Hiebert may be writing on effective Biblical missions, but it is advice for all passionate, reflective practitioners who desire to see spiritual formation take place in the church. The focus needs to be revised from teaching Biblical theology and spiritual disciplines to first bringing about a worldview transformation. Only after the believer has dug deep and built upon that firm foundation of a Biblical worldview will he be able to grow and spiritually mature. With a Biblical worldview as the foundation, believers will be able to think with the mind of Christ, feel with the heart of Christ, and live lives that reflect Christ.

¹⁵ Paul G. Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 11-12.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE ON WORLDVIEW

My name is Debarra Prentice, and I have been a full-time lecturer at HTC since 2007.

- As part of my doctoral thesis, I am researching the worldview of Bible school students at HTC.
- The results will help discern better ways to teach biblical truths to African students.
- All survey answers will remain confidential and anonymous – DO NOT put your name on this form!
- **Please answer all questions truthfully (not what you think you should answer as a Bible student).**

Circle the appropriate answer to questions 1-6.

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Race: Black Biracial White Other _____
3. Age: 20-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 61-70 70+
4. Number of years you have gone to Church: 1-5 6-10 11-15 16-20 21-25 26-30 30+
5. Number of years you have been a Christian: 1-5 6-10 11-15 16-20 21-25 26-30 30+
6. When did you begin your education at HTC? 2016-2017 2010-2015 2005-1010

You may select more than one answer. Tick every answer that pertains to you. There are no right or wrong answers.

1. When confronted by a crisis (i.e., severe illness, accident, death, or disaster) **what were you taught by your family to do?**
 - ☐ Consult the ancestors.
 - ☐ Go to a doctor/hospital.
 - ☐ Go to a pastor/church.
 - ☐ Go to a spirit medium/diviner/prophet to find out the cause of the crisis.
 - ☐ Go to a traditional healer.
 - ☐ Perform specific rituals/sacrifices.
 - ☐ Pray to God.
 - ☐ Other
2. What did your **family** teach you causes these crises?
 - ☐ Fate.
 - ☐ God.
 - ☐ Natural causes.
 - ☐ Offending the ancestors or other spirits.
 - ☐ Satan and evil spirits.
 - ☐ Witchcraft.
 - ☐ Other
3. When was the last time **you and your family** were personally or financially involved in a cultural or religious (Christian or traditional) ritual? **Which ritual(s)?**
 - ☐ This week.
 - ☐ This month.
 - ☐ This year.
 - ☐ In the past 5 years.
 - ☐ Other
 - ☐ Name the ritual(s)

4. What did your **family** teach you will happen to a person when they die?
 - ☐ Their spirit will join the ancestors.
 - ☐ They will be judged & rewarded or punished (heaven or hell) in an after-life, based on earthly life.
 - ☐ They will be reincarnated into a different life.
 - ☐ They will cease to exist.
 - ☐ Other
5. What did your **family** teach you to believe about the ancestors?
 - ☐ They are powerful created spiritual beings, but they are NOT my ancestors and God sovereignly rules over them and what they do.
 - ☐ They are the spirits of my ancestors, and they watch over me and my family.
 - ☐ They can discipline me and my family if we offend them.
 - ☐ They can speak to God and take my needs and problems to him.
 - ☐ They continue to exist, and we will be reunited with them after death, but they have no direct contact or communication with us now.
 - ☐ They expect me to remember them and perform the required rituals to appease them.
 - ☐ They really do not exist; it is all superstition.
 - ☐ They speak through spirit mediums, dreams, visions, and other supernatural methods.
 - ☐ They are demons.
 - ☐ Other
6. What did your **family** teach you to do when you are offended or injured by someone?
 - ☐ Demand reparation.
 - ☐ Forgive them and pray for them.
 - ☐ Get revenge.
 - ☐ Have them cursed.
 - ☐ Seek legal recourse.
 - ☐ Other
7. When was the last time **you and/or your family** were in a situation in which witchcraft was involved?
 - ☐ This week
 - ☐ This month
 - ☐ This year
 - ☐ In the past 5 years
 - ☐ Other
8. What did your **family** teach you to believe about mankind?
 - ☐ Man is born bad and tends to want to do bad things.
 - ☐ Man is born good, but he can choose to do evil.
 - ☐ Man is born morally neutral, he is not good or bad, but he can commit sinful acts.
 - ☐ Man is both a physical and spiritual being on earth, but only a spiritual being after death.
 - ☐ Man, being a physical being, is at the mercy of spirits and spiritual forces that can cause problems, therefore it is important to find ways to control these malevolent beings.
 - ☐ Man was created by God. Or Man was created by God.
 - ☐ Man was created in the image of God.
 - ☐ Other

9. What did your **family** teach you to believe about the universe?
 - God created the universe and designed natural laws that govern the way things work.
 - It was created by God with an intention and purpose.
 - Natural evils can happen upon the world creating chaos because there are spirits that can act harmfully or benevolently and can inhabit both animate and inanimate objects.
 - The present state of the universe is not the way God intended when he created it; sin caused the problems that are present in the world today.
 - The present state of the universe is still the way it was created; and as long as there is harmony between all life forces the universe will be at peace.
 - The universe and everything in it has always existed and will always exist.
 - There are spiritual forces that can violate the natural laws that God put in place.
 - This universe is a place where a spiritual battle is taking place between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan.
 - Other

10. What did your **family** teach you to believe about God?
 - He is eternal, sinless, merciful and loving, all-powerful, all-knowing, and present everywhere.
 - He is the creator of the universe who is closely involved with his creation.
 - He is the creator of the universe, but he himself remains uninvolved allowing the ancestors and other spirits to deal with creation.
 - He is unknowable and unapproachable except through intermediaries (spirit mediums/ancestors).
 - He seeks to have an intimate, loving relationship with mankind.
 - Other

11. What did your **family** teach you to consider to be morally wrong (sin) and its results?
 - Sinning against one's family or community (including the ancestors) will result in a crisis unless the appropriate rituals and payments are made.
 - Morality is relative to each individual and situation; therefore, whatever works best or seems right at the time is the right thing to do.
 - The greatest moral value is unity & harmony in the family; sin is creating disharmony or disunity.
 - There is a set of absolute moral laws, like natural laws, established by God and revealed in Scriptures, that apply to all cultures and times.
 - There may or may not be absolute moral standards; however, seeing as we cannot know them, each culture and person develops their own moral standard.
 - Other

12. What did your **family** teach you was the purpose of life?
 - To be faithful to one's family and to fulfil all obligations to one's family.
 - To do all that one's heart desires, no matter what that is.
 - To fulfil one's expected role in the family and community.
 - To get married and have children.
 - To grow in faith and come to know God better.
 - To live a life that is pleasing to God.
 - To prosper physically and financially through education and a good job.
 - Other

For each of the following questions, indicate which worldview you believe best exemplifies each statement by writing the appropriate letter (African, Biblical, or Other).

- Put A if it is an African teaching.
- Put B if it is taught in the Bible.
- Put O for Other worldviews or Unknown.

13. Beliefs as to what one should do when confronted by a crisis (i.e., severe illness, accident, death, or disaster) include:
A for African, B for Biblical, Q for Other / Unknown
☐ Consult the ancestors.
☐ Go to a doctor/hospital.
☐ Go to a pastor/church.
☐ Go to a spirit medium/diviner/prophet to find out the cause of the crisis.
☐ Go to a traditional healer.
☐ Perform specific rituals/sacrifices.
☐ Pray to God.
14. Beliefs about the causes of crises include:
A for African, B for Biblical, Q for Other / Unknown
☐ Fate.
☐ God
☐ Natural causes.
☐ Offending the ancestors or other spirits.
☐ Satan and evil spirits.
☐ Witchcraft.
15. Beliefs about what happens when a person dies include:
A for African, B for Biblical, Q for Other / Unknown
☐ Their spirit will join the ancestors.
☐ They will be judged & rewarded or punished (heaven/hell) in an after-life, based on earthly life.
☐ They will be reincarnated into a different life.
☐ They will cease to exist.
16. When offended or injured by someone it is believed that one should:
A for African, B for Biblical, Q for Other / Unknown
☐ Demand reparation.
☐ Forgive them and pray for them.
☐ Get revenge.
☐ Have them cursed.
☐ Seek legal recourse.
17. Beliefs about the ancestors include:
A for African, B for Biblical, Q for Other or Unknown
☐ They are powerful created spiritual beings, but they are not my ancestors, and God sovereignly rules over them and what they do.
☐ They are the spirits of my ancestors, and they watch over me and my family.
☐ They can discipline me and my family if we offend them.
☐ They can speak to God and take my needs and problems to him.
☐ They continue to exist, and we will be reunited with them after death, but they have no direct contact or communication with us now.
☐ They expect me to remember them and perform the required rituals to appease them.
☐ They really do not exist, it is all superstition.
☐ They speak through spirit mediums, dreams, visions, and other supernatural methods.
☐ They are demons.

18. Beliefs about mankind include:

A for African, B for Biblical, Q for Other / Unknown

- ☐ Man is born bad and tends to want to do bad things.
- ☐ Man is born good, but he can choose to do evil.
- ☐ Man is born morally neutral, he is not good or bad, but he can commit sinful acts.
- ☐ Man is both a physical and spiritual being on earth, but only a spiritual being after death.
- ☐ Man, being a physical being, is at the mercy of spirits and forces that can cause problems, therefore, it is important to find ways to control these malevolent beings.
- ☐ Man was created by God.
- ☐ Man was created in the image of God.

19. Beliefs about the universe include:

A for African, B for Biblical, Q for Other / Unknown

- ☐ God created the universe and designed natural laws that govern the way things work.
- ☐ It was created by God with an intention and purpose.
- ☐ Natural evils can happen upon the world creating chaos because there are spirits that can act harmfully or benevolently and can inhabit both animate and inanimate objects.
- ☐ The present state of the universe is not the way God intended when he created it; sin caused the problems that are present in the world today.
- ☐ The present state of the universe is still the way it was created; and as long as there is harmony between all life forces, the universe will be at peace.
- ☐ There are spiritual forces that can violate the natural laws that God put in place.
- ☐ This universe is a place where a spiritual battle is taking place between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan.
- ☐ The universe and everything in it has always existed and will always exist.

20. Beliefs about God include:

A for African, B for Biblical, Q for Other / Unknown

- ☐ He is eternal, sinless, merciful and loving, all-powerful, all-knowing, and present everywhere.
- ☐ He is the creator of the universe who is closely involved with his creation.
- ☐ He is the creator of the universe, but he himself remains uninvolved allowing the ancestors and other spirits to deal with creation.
- ☐ He is unknowable and unapproachable except through intermediaries (spirit mediums/ancestors).
- ☐ He seeks to have an intimate, loving relationship with mankind.

21. Beliefs about what is morally wrong (sin) includes:

A for African, B for Biblical, Q for Other / Unknown

- ☐ Committing a sin against one's family or community (including the ancestors) will result in a crisis unless the appropriate rituals and payments are made.
- ☐ Morality is relative to each individual and situation; therefore, whatever works best or seems right at the time is the right thing to do.
- ☐ The greatest moral value is unity & harmony in the family, sin is creating disharmony or disunity.
- ☐ There is a set of absolute moral laws, like natural laws, established by God and revealed in Scriptures, that apply to all cultures and times.
- ☐ There may or may not be absolute moral standards; however, seeing as we cannot know them, each culture and person develop their own moral standard.

22. What is the purpose of life?

A for African, B for Biblical, Q for Other / Unknown

- ___ To be faithful to one's family and to fulfil all obligations to one's family.
 ___ To do all that one's heart desires, no matter what that is.
 ___ To fulfil one's expected role in the family and community.
 ___ To get married and have children.
 ___ To grow in faith and come to know God better.
 ___ To live a life that is pleasing to God.
 ___ To prosper physically and financially through education and a good job.

Circle the most appropriate answer for YOU according to each statement.

23. I have been taught that a Christian is a person who goes to church regularly and lives a good life (i.e., no alcohol, drugs or sex outside of marriage).

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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24. I have been taught that a Christian is a person who has developed an intimate, loving relationship with God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit).

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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25. I DO NOT have an intimate relationship with Jesus at the present time.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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26. My relationship with Jesus has been growing so that I know him better now than I did last year.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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27. My prayer time involves telling God my problems and asking him to give me what I want and need.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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28. My prayer time involves two-way communication where I listen to God speak to me as much as I speak to God.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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29. I read the Bible regularly because I am supposed to do that, but I do not know how to get to know God by reading it.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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30. I study the Bible on a regular basis for the purpose of getting to know the Lord and his will for my life.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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31. I am ONLY involved in my church by attending the worship services (I do not fellowship with members or attend small group meetings).

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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32. I am involved in a community of believers where we support and encourage one another, pray for one another and hold each other accountable for living a holy life.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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APPENDIX B

SPIRITUAL FORMATION SURVEY

Directions: **(a.)** Only circle the letter of the ONE best answer that is true for YOU.

1. If you were sharing the Gospel with someone, what would you tell them is required for them to become a Christian?
 - a. They must be baptized and join a church.
 - b. They must believe that Jesus, the Son of God, came to die for our sins and rose from the dead.
 - c. They must pray the “sinner’s prayer.”
 - d. They must repent of their sins and live a life of obedience to Jesus.
2. When was the last time you shared the Gospel with a non-believer and gave them an opportunity to become a Follower of Christ?
 - a. This month.
 - b. This year.
 - c. In the past 5 years.
 - d. Never.
3. How often do you have a Devotional Time where you study the Bible, pray, and seek God’s will for your life?
 - a. Daily (5-7 days per week).
 - b. Weekly (1-3 days per week).
 - c. Monthly (2-4 days per month).
 - d. Rarely.
4. When having my Devotional Time or Quiet Time, I study the Bible by:
 - a. Randomly choosing and reading verses or passages that I like.
 - b. Reading a devotional guide such as The Daily Bread.
 - c. Reading and studying each individual book of the Bible in its entirety.
 - d. Using a study guide (book, CD, DVD, internet) that teaches me.
5. I read the Bible because:
 - a. I need to know what it says for my exams and assignments at HTC.
 - b. I want to come to know God.
 - c. I want to find out what God has promised to give me and claim those promises.
 - d. That is what is expected of me as a Christian.
6. My prayer time mainly involves:
 - a. Asking God to fix my problems or give me what I want.
 - b. Interceding for the needs and problems of my family, church and community.
 - c. Listening to God tell me what he wants me to pray about and do that day.
 - d. Telling God my problems, wants and needs.
7. I journal or write down important things when I have my Devotional Time so that I can reflect on what I learned from reading the Bible, remember what God has taught me, and to rejoice and thank the Lord for our time together.
 - a. YES, I keep a written log of my Devotional Times.
 - b. NO, I do not journal during my Devotional Times.

8. I continually watch for God's involvement in my everyday life whether through answered prayer or other indications that he is with me and guiding me each moment.
 - a. YES, I intently watch for God daily.
 - b. NO, I am not aware of God working in my life on a daily basis.
9. The last time I had a "God Hunt Sighting" where I could see God at work in my life was:
 - a. Today.
 - b. This week.
 - c. This month.
 - d. I'm not sure I've seen God at work in my life.
10. I have a Prayer Partner or Accountability Partner that I meet with on a regular basis to share our lives, confess our sins and pray for one another so that we can grow together in our spiritual lives.
 - a. YES, I have a specific person I meet with to pray and share my life with regularly.
 - b. NO, I do not meet with anyone to pray and share my life.
11. I serve the Lord's Church by:
 - a. Going to church regularly to worship God.
 - b. I am not involved in any church at the present time.
 - c. Serving in a leadership position in my church.
 - d. Teaching Sunday School or leading a Bible Study.
12. I know the Spiritual Gift that the Holy Spirit has given me and I am using it to serve the Body of Christ.
 - a. YES, I know my gift, it is:
 - b. NO, I do not know my gift or if I do know it I am not using it at the present time.
13. I am being mentored or discipled at the present time and I myself am mentoring or discipling someone.
 - a. YES, I am being mentored and I am mentoring someone.
 - b. NO, I am not being mentored and I am not mentoring anyone.
14. I realize that there are many Spiritual Disciplines that I could be practicing for the purpose of:
 - a. Being noticed in the Church as a mature Christian and being put in a leadership position.
 - b. Being transformed into the image of Christ.
 - c. Gaining God's approval on my life.
 - d. Getting to know God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) in an intimate way.
15. My African culture and worldview are separate from my Christian faith, therefore:
 - a. I do not feel there is a problem for me to participate in the African cultural rituals and practices with my family and community.
 - b. I am questioning whether I should continue to participate in the African rituals and practices.
 - c. I am unsure as to the difference between an African worldview and a Biblical worldview.
 - d. I realize that I need to allow the Holy Spirit to transform my worldview from an African to a Biblical worldview.

APPENDIX C

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Every worldview (African, Western, Eastern, etc) have many areas that oppose a Biblical worldview, and these beliefs hinder Christians from growing spiritually. As a teacher of the Spiritual Formation Class, I found that students struggled to understand and apply the spiritual disciplines that would help them develop an intimate, loving relationship with God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Take time to think through what beliefs in the African Worldview/Culture/Religion might hinder Christian spiritual development the most.

1. Christianity is all about having an intimate relationship with God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).
 - How do we help Africans understand this concept when the African Worldview teaches that God is far removed from mankind and only the ancestors can speak with him?
2. One of the most important aspects of this intimate relationship with God is prayer, or 2-way communication between God and man, where the Lord speaks to us, and we listen, and we speak to God, and he listens. It is not just a means to get what we want, but to do what God wants.
 - Animism is a religion in which prayer is all about manipulating the spirits to get what you want. As Christians how do we ensure that we are not trying to manipulate God when praying, but that we are seeking to know him and his will?
 - How do we help Africans understand that prayer is not a method to manipulate God, but to know God? He desires to have a 2-way conversation with us, yet the African Worldview says that we are unable to speak to God. We must first go to the spirit mediums who will speak to the ancestors, and they will go to God.
3. Bible study is another way that we can get to know God intimately because it reveals who he is, what he has done and what he wants. Reading the Bible is a way that God can speak to us as we seek him and his will for our lives.
 - How do we help Africans understand the importance of Bible study when the African culture is an oral culture, and the spoken word has more authority than the written word?
 - How do we help Africans learn how to read the Bible to get to know God instead of just looking for verses (promises) they like, and then memorize and quote them?

APPENDIX D

WORLDVIEW AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION SURVEY

My name is Debarra Prentice, and I have been a full-time lecturer at HTC since 2007.

- As part of my doctoral thesis, I am researching the worldview of Bible school students at HTC.
- The results will help discern better ways to teach biblical truths to African students.
- All survey answers will remain confidential and anonymous – DO NOT put your name on this form!
- **Please answer all questions truthfully (not what you think you should answer as a Bible student).**

Circle the appropriate answer to questions 1-6.

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Race: Black Biracial White Other _____
3. Age: 20-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 61-70 70+
4. Number of years you have gone to Church: 1-5 6-10 11-15 16-20 21-25 26-30 30+
5. Number of years you have been a Christian: 1-5 6-10 11-15 16-20 21-25 26-30 30+
6. When did you begin your education at HTC? 2016-2017 2010-2015 2005-1010

⊗ Tick EVERY answer that pertains to the question (you should have more than one answer).

7. When confronted by a crisis (i.e. severe illness, accident, death, or disaster) what does the **AFRICAN Culture/Religion/Worldview** teach you to do?
 - Consult the ancestors.
 - Go to a doctor/hospital.
 - Go to a pastor/church.
 - Go to a spirit medium/diviner/prophet to find out the cause of the crisis.
 - Go to a traditional healer.
 - Perform specific rituals/sacrifices.
 - Pray to God.
8. What does the **AFRICAN Culture/Religion/Worldview** teach you causes these crises?
 - Fate.
 - God.
 - Natural causes.
 - Offending the ancestors or other spirits.
 - Satan and evil spirits.
 - Witchcraft.
9. What does the **AFRICAN Culture/Religion/Worldview** teach will happen to a person when they die?
 - Their spirit will join the ancestors.
 - They will be judged and rewarded or punished (heaven or hell) in an after-life, based on their earthly life.
 - They will be reincarnated into a different life.
 - They will cease to exist.

10. What does the **AFRICAN Culture/Religion/Worldview** teach about the ancestors?
 - They are powerful created spiritual beings, but they are NOT my ancestors and God sovereignly rules over them and what they do.
 - They are the spirits of my ancestors and they watch over me and my family.
 - They can discipline me and my family if we offend them.
 - They can speak to God and take my needs and problems to him.
 - They continue to exist and we will be reunited with them after death, but they have no direct contact or communication with us now.
 - They expect me to remember them and perform the required rituals to appease them.
 - They really do not exist, it is all superstition.
 - They speak through spirit mediums, dreams, visions, and other supernatural methods.
 - They are demons.
11. What does the **AFRICAN Culture/Religion/Worldview** teach you to do when you are offended or injured by someone?
 - Demand reparation.
 - Forgive them and pray for them.
 - Get revenge.
 - Have them cursed.
 - Seek legal recourse.
12. What does the **AFRICAN Culture/Religion/Worldview** teach you to believe about mankind?
 - Man is born bad and tends to want to do bad things.
 - Man is born good, but he can choose to do evil.
 - Man is born morally neutral, he is not good or bad, but he can commit sinful acts.
 - Man is both a physical and spiritual being on earth, but only a spiritual being after death.
 - Man, being a physical being, is at the mercy of spirits and spiritual forces that can cause problems, therefore it is important to find ways to control these malevolent beings.
 - Man was created by God.
 - Man was created in the image of God.
13. What does the **AFRICAN Culture/Religion/Worldview** teach you to believe about the universe?
 - God created the universe and designed natural laws that govern the way things work.
 - It was created by God with an intention and purpose.
 - Natural evils can happen upon the world creating chaos because there are spirits that can act harmfully or benevolently and can inhabit both animate and inanimate objects.
 - The present state of the universe is not the way God intended when he created it; sin caused the problems that are present in the world today.
 - The present state of the universe is still the way it was created; and as long as there is harmony between all life forces the universe will be at peace.
 - The universe and everything in it has always existed and will always exist.
 - There are spiritual forces that can violate the natural laws that God put in place.
 - This universe is a place where a spiritual battle is taking place between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan.
14. What does the **AFRICAN Culture/Religion/Worldview** teach you to believe about God?
 - He is eternal, sinless, merciful and loving, all-powerful, all-knowing, and present everywhere.
 - He is the creator of the universe who is closely involved with his creation.
 - He is the creator of the universe, but he himself remains uninvolved allowing the ancestors and other spirits to deal with creation.
 - He is unknowable and unapproachable except through intermediaries (spirit mediums/ancestors).
 - He seeks to have an intimate loving relationship with mankind.

15. What does the **AFRICAN Culture/Religion/Worldview** teach you to consider to be morally wrong (sin) and its results?
- Committing a sin against one's family or community (including the ancestors) will result in a crisis unless the appropriate rituals and payments are made.
 - Morality is relative to each individual and situation; therefore, whatever works best or seems right at the time is the right thing to do.
 - The greatest moral value is unity and harmony in the family, sin is creating disharmony or disunity.
 - There is a set of absolute moral laws, like natural laws, established by God and revealed in Scriptures, that apply to all cultures and times.
 - There may or may not be absolute moral standards; however, seeing as we cannot know them, each culture and person develops their own moral standard.

16. What does the **AFRICAN Culture/Religion/Worldview** teach you is the **purpose of life**?
- To be faithful to one's family and to fulfil all obligations to one's family.
 - To do all that one's heart desires, no matter what that is.
 - To fulfil one's expected role in the family and community.
 - To get married and have children.
 - To grow in faith and come to know God better.
 - To live a life that is pleasing to God.
 - To prosper physically and financially through education and a good job.

⊗ Tick EVERY answer that pertains to the question (you should have more than one answer).

17. When confronted by a crisis (i.e. severe illness, accident, death, or disaster) what does the **BIBLE** teach you to do?
- Consult the ancestors.
 - Go to a doctor/hospital.
 - Go to a pastor/church.
 - Go to a spirit medium/diviner/prophet to find out the cause of the crisis.
 - Go to a traditional healer.
 - Perform specific rituals/sacrifices.
 - Pray to God.

18. What does the **BIBLE** teach you causes these crises?
- Fate.
 - God.
 - Natural causes.
 - Offending the ancestors or other spirits.
 - Satan and evil spirits.
 - Witchcraft.

19. What does the **BIBLE** teach will happen to a person when they die?
- Their spirit will join the ancestors.
 - They will be judged and rewarded / punished (heaven or hell) in an after-life, based on their earthly life.
 - They will be reincarnated into a different life.
 - They will cease to exist.

20. What does the **BIBLE** teach about the ancestors?
- They are powerful created spiritual beings, but they are NOT my ancestors and God sovereignly rules over them and what they do.
 - They are the spirits of my ancestors and they watch over me and my family.
 - They can discipline me and my family if we offend them.
 - They can speak to God and take my needs and problems to him.
 - They continue to exist and we will be reunited with them after death, but they have no direct contact or communication with us now.
 - They expect me to remember them and perform the required rituals to appease them.
 - They really do not exist, it is all superstition.
 - They speak through spirit mediums, dreams, visions, and other supernatural methods.
 - They are demons.
21. What does the **BIBLE** teach you to do when you are offended or injured by someone?
- Demand reparation.
 - Forgive them and pray for them.
 - Get revenge.
 - Have them cursed.
 - Seek legal recourse.
22. What does the **BIBLE** teach you to believe about mankind?
- Man is born bad and tends to want to do bad things.
 - Man is born good, but he can choose to do evil.
 - Man is born morally neutral, he is not good or bad, but he can commit sinful acts.
 - Man is both a physical and spiritual being on earth, but only a spiritual being after death.
 - Man, being a physical being, is at the mercy of spirits and spiritual forces that can cause problems, therefore it is important to find ways to control these malevolent beings.
 - Man was created by God.
 - Man was created in the image of God.
23. What does the **BIBLE** teach you to believe about the universe?
- God created the universe and designed natural laws that govern the way things work.
 - It was created by God with an intention and purpose.
 - Natural evils can happen upon the world creating chaos because there are spirits that can act harmfully or benevolently and can inhabit both animate and inanimate objects.
 - The present state of the universe is not the way God intended when he created it; sin caused the problems that are present in the world today.
 - The present state of the universe is still the way it was created; and as long as there is harmony between all life forces the universe will be at peace.
 - The universe and everything in it has always existed and will always exist.
 - There are spiritual forces that can violate the natural laws that God put in place.
 - This universe is a place where a spiritual battle is taking place between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan.
24. What does the **BIBLE** teach you to believe about God?
- He is eternal, sinless, merciful and loving, all-powerful, all-knowing, and present everywhere.
 - He is the creator of the universe who is closely involved with his creation.
 - He is the creator of the universe, but he himself remains uninvolved allowing the ancestors and other spirits to deal with creation.
 - He is unknowable and unapproachable except through intermediaries (spirit mediums/ancestors).
 - He seeks to have an intimate loving relationship with mankind.

25. What does the **BIBLE** teach you to consider to be morally wrong (sin) and its results?
- Committing a sin against one's family or community (including the ancestors) will result in a crisis unless the appropriate rituals and payments are made.
 - Morality is relative to each individual and situation; therefore, whatever works best or seems right at the time is the right thing to do.
 - The greatest moral value is unity and harmony in the family, sin is creating disharmony or disunity.
 - There is a set of absolute moral laws, like natural laws, established by God and revealed in Scriptures, that apply to all cultures and times.
 - There may or may not be absolute moral standards; however, seeing as we cannot know them, each culture and person develops their own moral standard.
26. What does the **BIBLE** teach you is the **purpose of life**?
- To be faithful to one's family and to fulfil all obligations to one's family.
 - To do all that one's heart desires, no matter what that is.
 - To fulfil one's expected role in the family and community.
 - To get married and have children.
 - To grow in faith and come to know God better.
 - To live a life that is pleasing to God.
 - To prosper physically and financially through education and a good job.

Directions: **(a.)** Only circle the letter of the **ONE best answer** that is true for YOU.

27. If you were sharing the Gospel with someone, what would you tell them is required for them to become a Christian?
- a. They must be baptized and join a church.
 - b. They must believe that Jesus is the Son of God who came to die for our sins & rose from the dead.
 - c. They must pray the "sinner's prayer."
 - d. They must repent of their sins and live a life of obedience to Jesus.
28. When was the last time you shared the Gospel with a non-believer and gave them an opportunity to become a Follower of Christ?
- a. This month.
 - b. This year.
 - c. In the past 5 years.
 - d. Never.
29. How often do you have a Devotional Time where you study the Bible, pray, and seek God's will for your life?
- a. Daily (5-7 days per week).
 - b. Weekly (1-3 days per week).
 - c. Monthly (2-4 days per month).
 - d. Rarely.
30. When having my Devotional Time or Quiet Time, I study the Bible by:
- a. Randomly choosing and reading verses or passages that I like.
 - b. Reading a devotional guide such as The Daily Bread.
 - c. Reading and studying each individual book of the Bible in its entirety.
 - d. Using a study guide (book, CD, DVD, internet) that teaches me.

31. I read the Bible because:
- I need to know what it says for my exams and assignments at HTC.
 - I want to come to know God.
 - I want to find out what God has promised to give me and claim those promises.
 - That is what is expected of me as a Christian.
32. My prayer time mainly involves:
- Asking God to fix my problems or give me what I need to fix them.
 - Interceding for the needs and problems of my family, church and community.
 - Telling God my problems, wants and needs.
 - Listening to God tell me what he wants me to pray about and do that day.
33. I journal or write down important things when I have my Devotional Time so that I can reflect on what I learned from reading the Bible, remember what God has taught me, and to rejoice and thank the Lord for our time together.
- YES, I keep a written log of my Devotional Times.
 - NO, I do not journal during my Devotional Times.
34. I continually watch for God's involvement in my everyday life whether through answered prayer or other indications that he is with me and guiding me each moment.
- YES, I watch for God daily.
 - NO, I am not aware of God working in my life on a daily basis.
35. The last time I had a "God Hunt Sighting" where I could see God at work in my life was:
- Today.
 - This week.
 - This month.
 - I'm not sure I've seen God at work in my life.
36. I have a Prayer Partner or Accountability Partner that I meet with on a regular basis to share our lives, confess our sins and pray for one another so that we can grow together in our spiritual lives.
- YES, I have a specific person I meet with to pray and share my life with regularly.
 - NO, I do not meet with anyone to pray and share my life.
37. I serve the Lord's Church by:
- Going to church regularly to worship God.
 - I am not involved in any church at the present time.
 - Serving in a leadership position in my church.
 - Teaching Sunday School or leading a Bible Study.
38. I know the Spiritual Gift that the Holy Spirit has given me and I am using it to serve the Body of Christ.
- YES, I know my gift is: _____
 - NO, I do not know my gift.
39. I am being mentored or discipled at the present time and I myself am mentoring or discipling someone.
- YES, I am being mentored and/or I am mentoring someone.
 - NO, I am not being mentored and/or I am not mentoring anyone.

40. I realize that there are many Spiritual Disciplines that I could be practicing for the purpose of:
- a. Being noticed in the Church as a mature Christian and being put in a leadership position.
 - b. Being transformed into the image of Christ.
 - c. Gaining God's approval on my life.
 - d. Getting to know God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) in an intimate way.
41. My African culture and worldview are separate from my Christian faith, therefore:
- a. I do not feel there is a problem for me to participate in the African cultural rituals and practices with my family and community.
 - b. I am questioning whether I should continue to participate in the African rituals and practices.
 - c. I don't know the difference between an African worldview and a Christian worldview.
 - d. I realize that I need to allow the Holy Spirit to transform my worldview from an African to a Christian worldview, but I don't know how.
 - e. I have evaluated my worldview and I live by a biblical worldview.

APPENDIX E

TOOL FOR WORLDVIEW EVALUATION

Questions On Worldview	What I Believe	What the AWV Teaches	Bible Verses On These Topics	What the Bible Teaches
God <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who is he? Where did he come from and when? Is there one God or many? What are his attributes? What are God's roles? What has he done in the past? What is he doing at the present? What will he do in the future? What can he do and what can't he do? What kind of relationship does he have with creation? 			<i>Deut 32:3-5; Deut 33:27; 2 Sam 22:31; Ps 7:9; Ps 89:14; Ps 115:3; Ps 139:8; Mal 3:6; Matt 10:29-31; Matt 19:7; Lk 8:17; Jn 3:16; 1 Tim 2:4; James 1:17; 2 Pet 3:9; 1 Jn 1:9;</i>	
Man <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who is he, what is he? Where did he come from and when? What are his attributes? What are man's roles? What can man do and what can't he do? What is the purpose of his life? Are all men created equal? Can man know God? How? 			<i>Gen 1:26-28; Gen 2:7, 15-17; Gen 3:16-24; Gen 9:3-6; Ps 8:4-8; Ps 145:18; Is 59:2; Is 53:6; Matt 26:41; Matt 28:19-20; Mk 11:24; Lk 11:2-11; Jn 1:12; Acts 1:8; Rom 3:23; Rom 7:18-19; Rom 8:5-14; 1 Cor 12:4-7, 12-13; Phil 4:6; 1 Jn 5:14-16</i>	
Universe <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where did it come from? Does it have a beginning, or has it always existed? Why is it here? Who is responsible for taking care of it? Has it always been in the state it is in now? 			<i>Gen 1; Gen 3:1; Job 12:23; Ps 24:1; Ps 103:19; Jn 1:3; Col 1:16-17; Acts 17:24-28; Rom 5:12; Rom 8:19-21; 2 Cor 4:18; Heb 1:2-3</i>	
Death <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What happens to man when he dies? Is there life after death? What kind of life and where? Will man be spirit or have a body? Who, where and what are the ancestors? What can they do and not do? 			<i>Deut 10:12; Matt 6:10; Matt 25:32-34, 41-46; Lk 16:22-24; Jn 3:36; 1 Thess 4:13-17; Heb 9:27; Rev 20:11-15; Rev 21:1-2; 21-24</i>	
Truth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there absolute truth that can be known? How? Is there a right and wrong that applies to everyone? What is sin? What happens if we don't live by the truth? What is the Bible? Where did it come from? Should we read & study it? 			<i>Ex 20:1-3; Lev 4:1-3; Ps 33:4; Ps 119:151-152; Jn 14:6; Jn 16:13; Rom 1:18-20, 28-32; Rom 7:12, 18-19; Rom 13:1-4; 2 Tim 3:16; Titus 3:8</i>	
Spiritual Realm <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a spiritual realm as well as a physical realm? Can man interact with both realms? Who rules the spiritual realm? Who rules the physical realm? Which realm is more powerful? Who exists in which realm? 			<i>Matt 13:38-39; Eph 6:11-12; Rev 12:7-9</i>	
Who or what is the main focus of the AWV?			Who or what is the main focus of the Bible?	

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